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Bright ideas for
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DAN PEARSON
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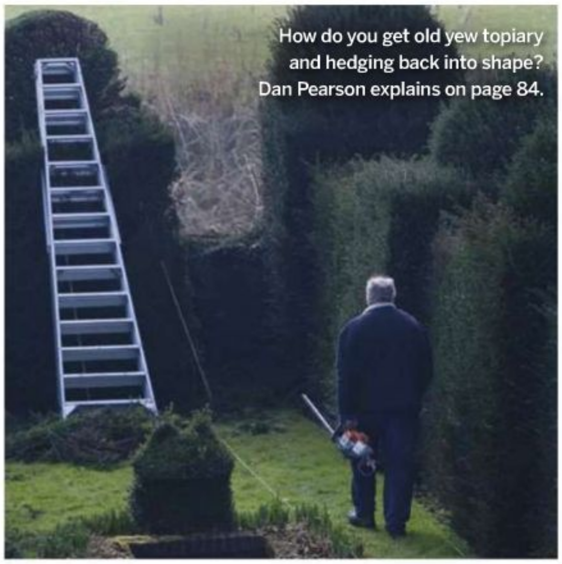
editor's letter

I've been going through our latest reader survey results and it seems that while the vast majority of you are very happy with our current mix of features, a number of readers would like more insights into three specific areas: practical gardening, garden history and growing vegetables. I'm delighted that in this issue we feature all of these topics: in our *Gardening Masterclass* Dan Pearson explains how to restore yew topiary and hedging (page 84); Mary Kocol looks at the history of early photography in the garden (page 74); and an expert pumpkin grower gives advice on the best ones to grow, as well as providing some delicious recipes (page 46). I'm in the process of planning our line-up of features for next year so if you have any suggestions, please let us know (contact details on page 6). Recently, we've had a number of readers asking us for specific advice on plants, planting combinations, and where to buy certain products. We're always delighted to do our best to help out, and if we don't know the answer we invariably know someone who does, so please keep the letters coming – it's a great way of sharing hard-to-find information. And if you've begun writing your Christmas shopping list, it's worth noting that we've got a special seasonal subscription offer to GARDENS ILLUSTRATED on page 36. What better way to make a gardening friend happy all year round?

Juliet



How do you get old yew topiary and hedging back into shape? Dan Pearson explains on page 84.

Grow your own pumpkin patch with our expert guide to the best varieties, plus four delicious recipes – see page 46.

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YANN MONEL, HEIDI LERKENFELDT

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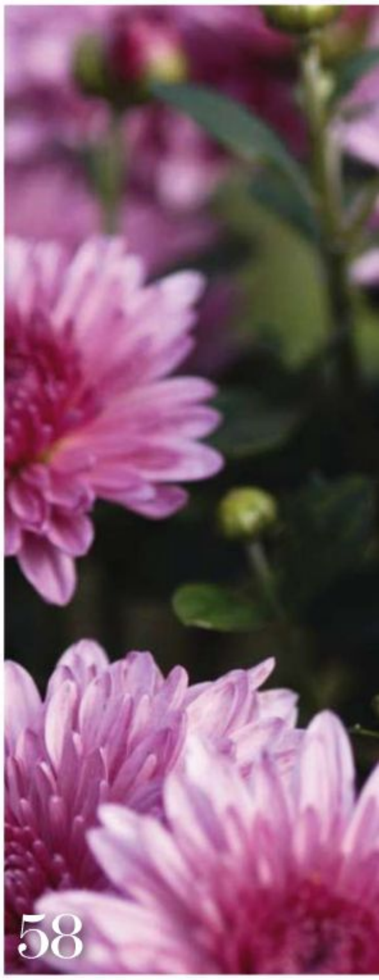

COVER IMAGE

Chrysanthemum 'Paul Boissier', photographed by Torie Chugg. Turn to our *Plant profile* on page 58 for details.

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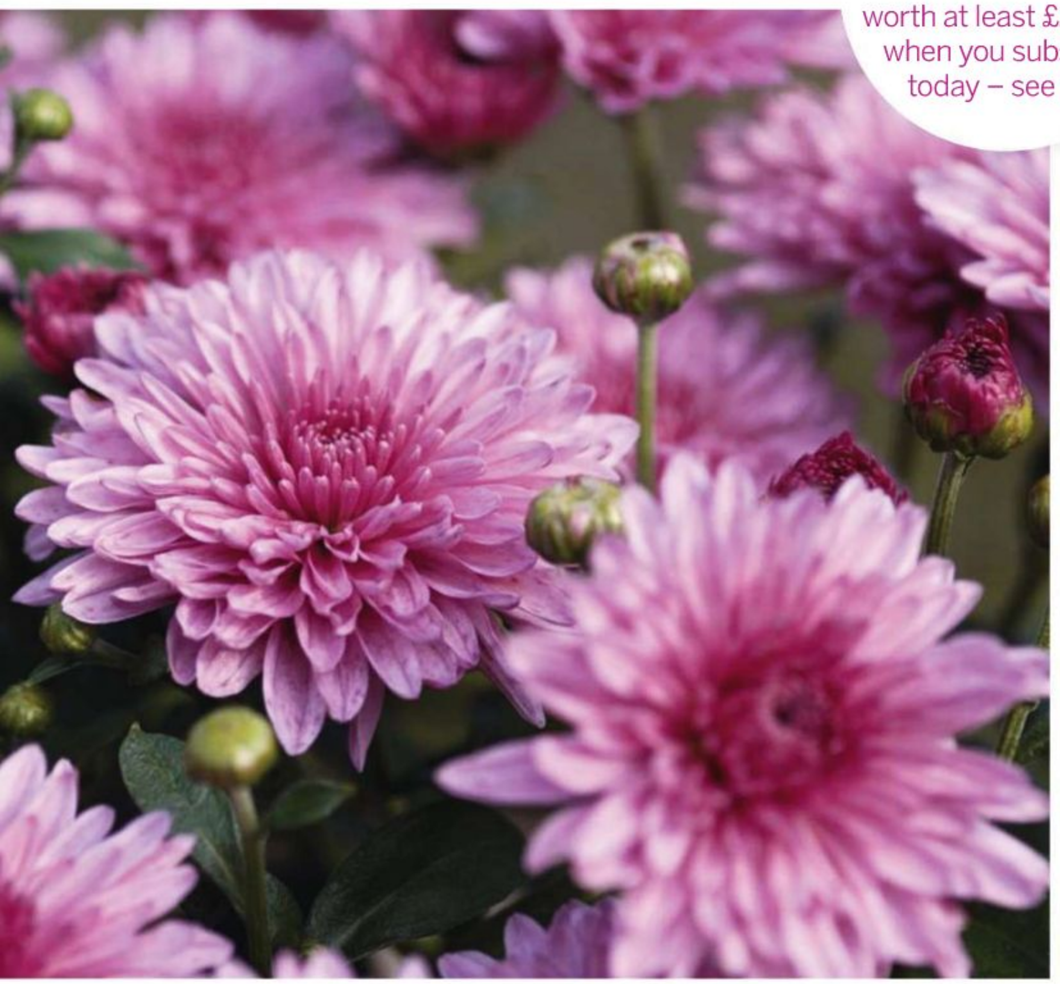

better broad beans, with cultivation tips and advice on the best cultivars

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- Visit the luxuriant gardens of Sicily on our reader holiday in May 2011 – turn to page 93 for details
- Join our tour of stunning German gardens in June 2011 – turn to page 23 for further information

** Discount rate and free gift offer apply to UK readers only

contacts

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Jan–Jun 2010
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WINNER

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Contributors

“There are many reasons a garden comes to be. This one was a collaborative process.”

MATTHEW WILSON

Radio and television broadcaster Matthew regularly contributes to a variety of gardening and mainstream media such as *Gardeners' World*, *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph*. He learns about the transformation of a well-tended Wimbledon garden on page 66.

“Gardens are places for reflection and meditation – I hope that's what people see in my work.”

YANN MONEL

Originally a gardener, Yann moved into photography 15 years ago. Now based near Paris, he has recently worked on a book that accompanies a successful French TV gardening series. His photographs of topiary in a Dutch garden are on page 84.

“Marle Place is a hidden labyrinth, full of artifacts, and great colours, and stuffed with rustic charm.”

RACHEL WARNE

Now based in London, Rachel's interest in photographing plants began when she moved to the Fens as a child. Her portfolio won the International Garden Photographer of the Year 2010. She lends her ethereal and nonconformist style to Marle Place on page 38.

“In this digital age, it's refreshing to revisit early photography.”

MARY KOCOL

Working as an essayist and photographer, Massachusetts-based Mary has photographs displayed in London's V&A museum and New York's Museum of Modern Art, among others. She examines the presence of gardens in early Victorian photography on page 74.

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GLORIOUS GARDENS

Bath · York · London

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EXPLORE

1 BEAUTIFUL BATH

NAVIGATE BATH'S WINDING GEORGIAN STREETS WITH EASE THANKS TO THE NEW NISSAN MICRA

1
CITY OF BATH

Best known for its Georgian architecture and Roman baths, the city of Bath is built around a web of vertiginous roads – some trickier to navigate than others – but still manages to retain sufficient greenery to delight any garden lover. As with any city, parking is limited, but that shouldn't stop you exploring by car. The New Nissan Micra has a host of features that make light work of city driving. There's the in-built touch screen satellite navigation system to lead the way, and the state-of-the-art parking system to help you get in to tight spots.

1. CITY OF BATH BOTANICAL GARDENS

☎ 01225 394041

If you despair of growing your favourite plants because your garden is made up of limey soil, a visit to these gardens should reassure you that (almost) anything is still possible. From relatively humble beginnings in 1887 as the collection of an amateur botanist, the gardens now encompass nine acres, complete with rock garden, herbaceous borders and replica Roman temple, which first came to attention at the British Empire Exhibition in 1924. Open daily all year round, from 9am to dusk. Entry is free.

2. PRIOR PARK LANDSCAPE GARDEN

☎ 01225 833422

ℹ www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Several eminent gardeners had a hand in making these 18th-century gardens, with spectacular views over Bath. Capability Brown swept away the formal areas around the house, while poet Alexander Pope suggested the Wilderness. Take the circular walk around the estate to enjoy its serpentine lake, cascade, gravel cabinet and swathes of flowering bulbs in spring. Open weekends only in winter, 11am-5.30pm. Entrance £5.50, concessions £3.10.

PICTURE CREDITS: (1) City of Bath Botanical Gardens, (2) NTPL/Andrew Butler, (3) Bath Priory Hotel (4) NTPL/Arnhel de Serra (Bath UK), Hidden Gem: Herschel Museum of Astronomy

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HIDDEN GEM!

HERSCHEL MUSEUM OF ASTRONOMY

☎ 01225 446865

www.bath-preservation-trust.org.uk

One night in 1781, peering through a telescope in his garden, William Herschel discovered Uranus. Herschel's home is now a museum dedicated to the achievements of this pioneering astronomer and composer. The garden is authentically Georgian, with arbour and plants that would have been available to gardeners of the era. Open weekdays except Wednesdays, 1pm-5pm; weekends and Bank Holidays, 11am-5pm. Entrance £4.50, concessions £4.

3. BATH PRIORY HOTEL

☎ **01225 331922**

www.thebathpriory.co.uk

Three acres of south-facing walled garden lie hidden behind this smart hotel in the west of the city. The herbaceous borders, flower meadow and fragrant roses are vibrant in summer; snowdrops and flowering bulbs light up the dell in spring. Head gardener Jane Moore's vegetable garden supplies fresh produce to the hotel restaurant. You are free to wander the gardens whether staying at the hotel, visiting the spa or taking afternoon tea. If you're thinking of staying at the hotel make sure you book a garden view.

4. DYRHAM PARK

☎ **0117 937 2501**

www.nationaltrust.org.uk

This romantic landscape north of Bath comprises 272 acres of rolling parkland. You enter the estate high above the house, with spectacular views towards Bristol. A lime avenue sweeps down to the Baroque house. Beyond lies the west garden, with long borders, ornamental ponds and cascade. The grand 18th-century orangery is a reminder of the formal splendour of the gardens that once surrounded the house. Garden open weekends until 19 December; park open all year. Entrance £11; gardens and park only, £4.40.

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Sightseeing in the city isn't always easy when streets are busy and parking limited, but that doesn't mean you should leave your car at home. With, touch-screen navigation and user-friendly parking assistance, the New Nissan Micra was designed to ease the pressure of exploring a new city.

PARKING PAIN

We've all done it. You're driving around, desperately trying to find somewhere to park, when you spot a space ahead. But is it too small for your car? As you try to squeeze in, your blood pressure rises by the second as traffic piles up behind you.

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Model shown and referred to throughout this city guide is Micra 1.2 Tekna manual priced at £12,095 on the road plus optional metallic paint at £400 inc VAT. Refer to dealer for exact specification. Models subject to availability. Parking system images are for representation only.

EXPLORE

2 ENCHANTING YORK

ENJOY THE GRANDEUR AND BEAUTY OF YORK FROM THE COMFORT OF THE NEW NISSAN MICRA

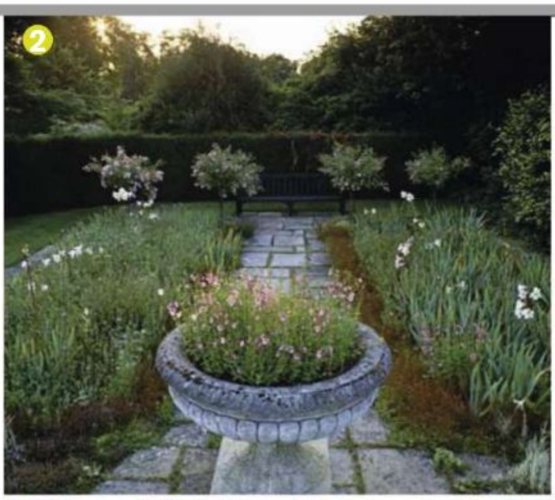
PICTURE CREDITS: (1) NTPL/Andrew Butler, (2) NTPL/Andrew Butler, (3) NTPL/Ian Shaw, (4) Castle Howard, Hidden Gem: University of York

A conservation area since the 1960s, the historic city of York combines vibrant modern living with carefully preserved, ancient surroundings. York was first founded in 71AD, when it consisted of just a Roman fortress. Today, you'll find York Minster, one of the city's most captivating landmarks, resting on the very same site. And as just one of the many sights, you'll need plenty of energy to navigate the city, so why not let the New Nissan Micra help you conduct your tour in the easiest way possible? With its generously proportioned cabin, climate control and touch-screen satellite navigation system, there's no better way to get around.

1. FOUNTAINS ABBEY AND STUDLEY ROYAL WATER GARDEN

☎ 01765 608888
ⓘ www.nationaltrust.org.uk

A World Heritage site, this remarkable landscape is widely regarded as a masterpiece of the early Picturesque movement. The glory of its 800 acres is the Georgian water park created by landscape designer John Aislabie and his son William. Explore this series of ponds set in a valley ornamented by follies, classical pavilions, statues and the ruins of the 12th-century abbey. Gardens open Saturday to Thursday, 10am to 4pm. Entrance £8.50.



2. NUNNINGTON HALL

☎ 01439 748283
ⓘ www.nationaltrust.org.uk

This magnificient 17th-century manor house – once home to Robert Huicke, physician to Elizabeth I – is set in eight acres of grounds on the banks of the River Rye. The large walled garden has been managed organically since 2002, and includes orchards of traditional Rydedale and Yorkshire Cockpit apple trees set in charming wildflower meadows. There are also roses, irises, mixed borders, lawns and a tea garden, and peacocks sweep majestically through the grounds. Open weekends until 19th December. Entrance £6.60.

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HIDDEN GEM!

CAMPUS GARDENS

☎ **0844 939 0014**

www.yorkminster.org

York has many fine public gardens worth visiting. In particular, Deans Park has wonderful views of the Minster, and the museum gardens have some handsome old trees. Often overlooked by visitors are the university gardens. Laid out around a lake by landscape consultant Frank Clark in the '60s, the grounds include the huge clipped yews of the Peace Garden. A restored courtyard garden lies next to the 16th-century Heslington Hall. Open all year round, daily, dawn to dusk. Entry is free.

3. BENINGBROUGH HALL AND GARDENS

☎ **01904 472027**

www.nationaltrust.org.uk

This fine Georgian mansion is set in a park and gardens, surrounded by water meadows near the River Ouse. A lovely working walled garden supplies organic produce to the restaurant. Its lavender beds hum with bees in summer and espalier pears and apples are heavy with fruit in autumn. Beyond the walled garden lies an American garden, rose garden, new Italianate border, community orchard and lily pond that attracts birds, insects and amphibians. Gardens open weekends, 11am to 3.30pm. Entrance in winter £5.50.

4. CASTLE HOWARD

☎ **01653 648640**

www.castlehoward.co.uk

The sheer scale of Castle Howard is awe-inspiring. A five-mile avenue of beech and lime trees is your first glimpse of the enormous estate, which is well over 1,000 acres and includes a 127-acre arboretum. The garden buildings are by Vanbrugh and Hawksmoor. But there are more intimate gardens to enjoy, too. There's a lovely potager, rich delphinium borders and walled rose gardens, which contain a huge collection of old-fashioned and species roses. Open all year round, daily from 10am-6:30pm. Entrance £8.50, concessions £8.

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When taking in the beauty of the Yorkshire Dales you deserve to be treated like royalty. The New Nissan Micra offers great comfort and style. While still retaining its classic modern design and compact size, the New Nissan Micra features a longer wheelbase, meaning that the interior is even roomier. More leg and head room means a more comfortable ride as you tour Britain's most beautiful cities, taking in awe-inspiring panoramas through expansive windows and the elegant glass roof.

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EXPLORE

3 TRANQUIL LONDON

THE CAPITAL HAS SO MUCH MORE TO OFFER THAN HUBBUB – TAKE A LOOK WITH THE NEW NISSAN MICRA

London is one of the most vibrant and diverse cities in the world. Not only does it have a varied and fascinating history, it also has an ever-changing cityscape that offers up something new and exciting every time you visit. With everything from world-class sights to award-winning museums, London has many claims to fame, as well as an incredible range of attractions – there really is something to suit every taste. The country's capital also has one of the most ambitious environmental and climate-change targets in the world, with plans to build an environmentally-sound future for both visitors and inhabitants alike, a sentiment that is shared by the designers of the eco-friendly New Nissan Micra.

1. HAMPTON COURT PALACE

☎ 0844 482 7777
🖱 www.hrp.org.uk

Famous for its ancient grapevine and maze, these 60 acres of gardens on the southwestern edge of the capital boast both formal and informal areas. The spectacular Great Fountain surrounded by lawns and huge clipped yews and Baroque Privy garden are icily elegant, the Wilderness and 20th-century gardens relaxed and charming. Open daily in winter: formal gardens 10am to 5.30pm, informal gardens 7am to 6pm. Entrance to all gardens is free in winter, except the Maze, which costs £3.85.

2. THAMES BARRIER PARK

☎ 020 7476 3741
🖱 www.thamesbarrierpark.org.uk

This spectacular modern park makes a dramatic counterpoint to the Thames Flood Barrier, whose upturned steel hulls span the river. French landscape architects Groupe Signes have completely transformed this huge 22-acre space in London's Docklands. Once a contaminated industrial site, it's now a wide expanse of lawns and wildflower meadows. In the Green Dock, an enormous sunken garden, imaginative perennial planting threads through long, dark yew hedges clipped in waves. Open 7am, closing times vary according to season. Entry is free.

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HIDDEN GEM!

INNER TEMPLE GARDENS

☎ **020 7797 2843**
www.innertemple.org.uk

The three-acre communal gardens include a 70m herbaceous border by head gardener Andrea Brunsendorf, whose shrewd successional planting ensures a flamboyant display of colour until the autumn. Other features include woodlands, stunning rose beds, a beautiful peony garden and an avenue of mature plane trees along the embankment boundary. Usually open weekdays, 12pm-3.30pm (entry is free); contact gardens to check.

3. LONDON WETLAND CENTRE

☎ **020 8409 4400**
www.wwt.org.uk

This 105-acre nature reserve is worth visiting, not just for its bird life, open wetland landscape and wildflower meadows, but also for its 'green gardens'. Chelsea Best in Show winning designer Arne Maynard's wildlife garden, and the newly opened Rain Garden by Nigel Dunnett and Matthew Wilson, both show how to make beautiful gardens full of diverse micro-habitats for insects and birds. Open daily (except Christmas Day), 9.30am-6pm (5pm in winter). Entrance £9.50, concessions £7.40.

4. THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, KEW

☎ **020 8332 5655**
www.kew.org

The scale of Kew can be dizzying: 300 acres; 30,000 different plants, and a workforce of more than 650, many devoted to botanical research. Nowhere else in London demonstrates the grandeur, beauty and ingenuity of nature in such lavish style. Its collection of mature trees looks ravishing in autumn and its sultry greenhouses are full of exotic glamour in winter. Open daily from 9.30am (closing times vary according to season). Entrance £13.50, concessions £11.50.

ADVERTISING PROMOTION

NEW NISSAN MICRA

RESPONSIBLE DRIVING

Looking after the planet has become a concern for all of us and so the New Nissan Micra has been designed to help reduce the impact of your travels around the UK.

A GREEN POWER BASE

At the heart of the New Nissan Micra is a 1.2 litre 3-cylinder petrol engine. Compact and lightweight, the engine offers improved fuel economy, achieving around 56.5 miles to the gallon on average (combined cycle). With the lowest CO_2 emissions in a petrol car of its class*, you can be assured that you're saving the planet as well as saving the pounds.

PEAK PERFORMANCE

Not satisfied with merely improving the performance of the engine, Nissan have worked hard to cut down on the use of materials. The New Nissan Micra is 50kg lighter, using 18% fewer components in the dashboard than its predecessor. This weight-saving design means improved fuel economy, cutting its carbon footprint by 17%, but not at the expense of safety or style.

**Fuel consumption figures for Nissan Micra Range: CO_2 115-125g/km; Urban – 42.2-46.3mpg/6.7-6.1L/100km; Extra urban – 61.4-65.7mpg/4.6-4.3L/100km; Combined – 52.3-56.5mpg/5.4-5.0L/100KM*

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We also have three one year memberships to the Royal Horticultual Society (RHS) up for grabs. Whether you are starting out with your first garden, or simply enjoy visiting gardens, there's a wealth of inspiration with RHS membership. Enjoy a whole year of gardening benefits including: buying discounted tickets to RHS Shows or getting special access; free days out to RHS gardens with a family guest; personal gardening advice and a monthly members' magazine. Plus, your gift comes with a presentation wallet filled with seeds and vouchers!

RHS Gift Membership
With love
£5 Gift Voucher
£5 off
Sweet Peas
basil

To be in with a chance of winning, simply go to www.gardensillustrated.com/micra and answer this simple question:

WHAT YEAR WAS THE RHS FOUNDED?

a) 1704
b) 1804
c) 1904

WIN A NEW NISSAN MICRA

To be in with a chance to win a fantastic New Nissan Micra all you need do is share one of your favourite gardens. When you enter the competition above, all you need to do is describe a great Hidden Gem that you love to visit. Tell us why you love it in no more than 100 words and you will be entered into a draw to win a New Nissan Micra.

Go to www.gardensillustrated.com/micra to enter and you could soon be driving off with a New Nissan Micra

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: 1. 3 x RHS Gift Membership: The full year's membership begins when an activation card inside the Gift Pack is returned to the RHS by the gift recipient. Gift Membership is valued at £49 for one year's individual membership. The contents of the pack may vary. To purchase additional Gift Packs for friends and family call the RHS on 0845 130 4646 or visit www.rhs.org.uk/gift. The RHS is the UK's leading gardening charity – Registered Charity Number 222879/SC038262. 2. The competition to win the RHS membership is also running in Gardeners' World magazine. 3. The promoter of this competition is Nissan UK, Tattersall Way Chelmsford, Essex CM1 3YT 4. The competition to win a new Nissan Micra is also running in BBC History, BBC Music, BBC Wildlife, Countryfile, Homes and Antiques, Radio Times and Gardeners' World magazine. 5. Colour of actual car may differ from that shown. 5. For full terms & conditions (including prize Micra model details) go to www.gardensillustrated.com/micra

NEW NISSAN MICRA

IN SYNC WITH THE CITY

letters

Have your say – we'd like to hear your views, so please write to us at: GARDENS ILLUSTRATED, 9th Floor, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN, or email letters@gardensillustratedmagazine.com

star letter

A black day for Dad's prize toms

My father has recently passed on and regrettably I have a confession that I should have shared when he was alive. Dad was a keen gardener and when I was a child he would take me to his allotment to give him a hand. On one hot day, at the peak of a period of relentless sunshine, we arrived to find the tomatoes in his greenhouse wilting. My dad bemoaned the heat of the greenhouse and told me it was going to "kill all my tomatoes" and that they would be "useless for the vegetable competition" at the village fête. Of course, he was exaggerating, but I don't think I could have appreciated this at the time.

I was of an age (eight) when you think you have answers to problems that adults are too silly to solve. Later that day I sneaked back and with a pot of old paint from Dad's shed, I painted the whole greenhouse black. I was working on the theory that black paint was like the slate on the roof of our nice cool house and would protect Dad's precious tomatoes from the sun's harmful rays; Dad was going to be SO pleased. Before I left, I even had the forethought to remove all the horrible green and yellow tomatoes – boy, was Dad going to be proud.

You already know what happened next: two days later when my dad returned to the greenhouse, the tomatoes were ruined. I remember him saying "they are not even fit for a tomato sauce!" I loved tomato sauce so I knew that what he was saying couldn't be good. Dad blamed the "black paint incident" on vandals and wrote letters to the school, councillors and even our MP. It wasn't vandals, Dad, it was me. Please forgive me.

Jacob Hanerman, Thaxted, Essex

Gardener's question

Making a gravel garden

Can you tell me what the surface is made of in the recent feature about a gravel garden (issue 163, p50)? Is it easy to replicate?

David Guest, Colchester, Essex

James Alexander-Sinclair, the garden's designer, replies: It's simple. Strip off or weed-kill your turf. Plant lots of plants and cover with small-grade gravel (about 10-14mm). I don't use membranes for such jobs as it inhibits self-seeding and is slippery: the gravel slides about and, before you can say *Metasequoia*, nasty bits of black plastic are sticking up all over the place. Good luck!

Reader tip

How to keep off carrot fly

For several years now I've grown carrots in raised beds in my garden. From trials of various ideas for ways of combating the dreaded carrot fly I have developed a fail-safe protection system that has never let me down.

Even before you begin to grow carrots, plant a large bed of garlic cloves. (My beds are 8ft by 4ft and I get about 30 full cloves from each.) When it's time to harvest and string them, keep the tops, chop them a little and mix these with grass cuttings and rhubarb leaves. Keep these somewhere reasonably dry and when you first plant out your carrots, use the garlic toppings as a mulch. Be generous with it and the carrot and celery fly won't be visiting your patch again. Simply keep the cycle going each year for safe, pest clear and sustainable crops.

David Stewart, County Down.

WRITE TO US & WIN

The star letter wins a case of 12 bottles of Cousino Macul Antiguas Reservas Cabernet Sauvignon 2007, worth £8.99 a bottle.* For details visit www.cousinomacul.com

* alternative prize for overseas readers

COUSIÑO-MACUL

Nerines

Gardener's question

Disappearing nerines

Carol Klein's uplifting article on nerines (issue 166, page 46) filled me with gloom. A few years ago I bought a pot of nerines and planted them in my garden. Every year the strappy leaves get to about six inches long and I get excited thinking at last I will get some flowers – then the next time I look there is no sign of any green at all. What could the ruthless predator be? What can I do about it? I live in Devon and am taunted by the nerine displays that Carol describes.

Rosie Kenna, Devon

Nerine grower Matt Bishop of The Garden House replies: It sounds suspiciously to me that your *Nerine* foliage is getting chomped by slugs, which tend to be active in any prolonged periods of wet weather, like our last three summers in Devon.

Everyone has their own way of dispatching slugs, depending on how much time is at your disposal – I find that a few of the dreaded slug pellets work well.

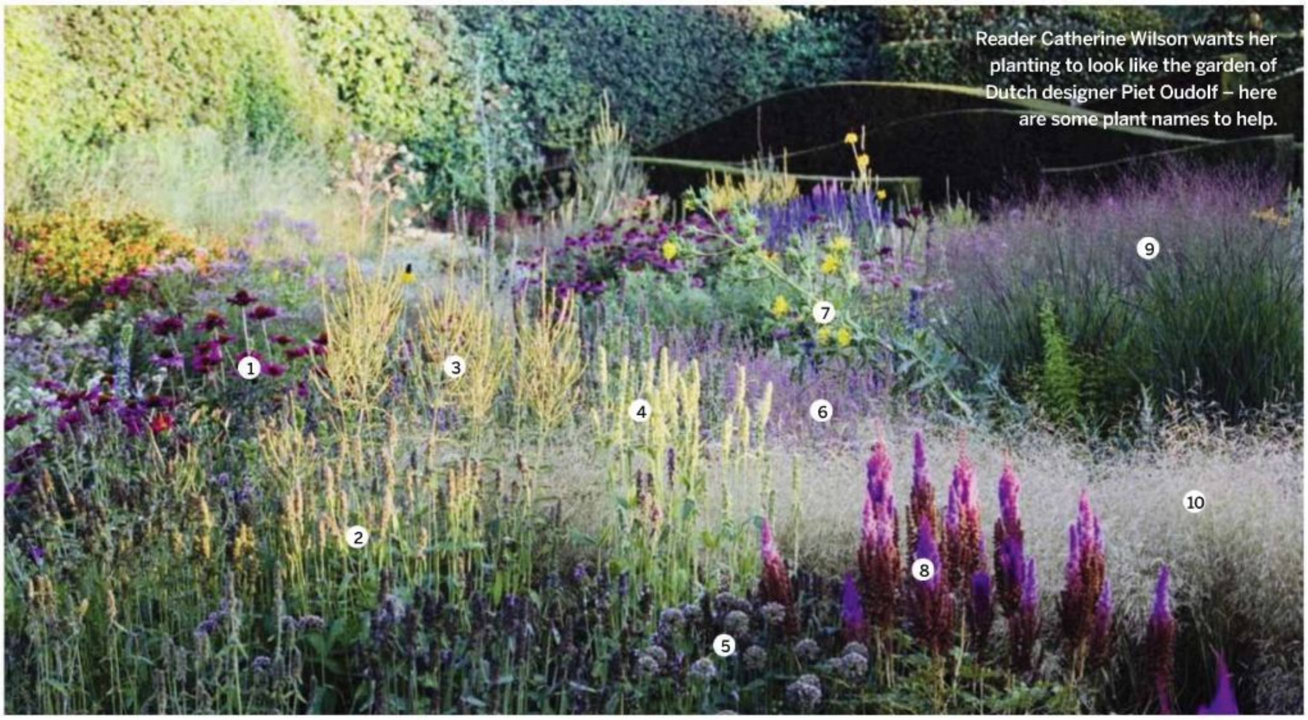
Nerines don't like to be over-hung by neighbours – this can provide moist hiding places for molluscs, so good husbandry is worth the effort.

Don't expect your nerines to put on an AGM performance next year, or the one after. It sounds as if your bulbs need to build themselves up to flowering size with some ongoing maintenance.

More letters overleaf ▷

PAINTBRUSH SHOT – EGORIUS / ALAMY

letters CONTINUED



Reader Catherine Wilson wants her planting to look like the garden of Dutch designer Piet Oudolf – here are some plant names to help.

WALTER HERFST

Gardener's question **What are the gorgeous plants in Piet's garden?**

I have purchased GARDENS ILLUSTRATED for the last few months and have thoroughly enjoyed the articles, getting lots of ideas both to improve my planting and about plants to add to give that extra factor.

Some articles number the plants and then describe them – this is an excellent idea. I enjoyed the garden history article with the half-page photograph of Piet Oudolf's garden at Hummelo [see above].

I just love this planting but there were no numbers labelling the plants. I did not recognise the yellow spiky plants and would love to know what they are. I presume the whitish/yellow plant beside it is a *Sanguisorba*, but which one? Lastly the clump on the right in the centre of the photo with a purple hue – is it a grass?
Catherine Wilson, by email

Editor's note: We asked Piet Oudolf to tell us more about the plants in the picture – and here is a full list for you, Catherine. I hope you enjoy using some of Piet's wonderful planting ideas in your garden.

Piet Oudolf's plant list:

1 *Echinacea purpurea* 'Rubinglow'
2 *Stachys officinalis* 'Hummelo'
3 *Veronicastrum* 'Adoration'
4 *Stachys officinalis*
5 *Allium lusitanicum* (='Summer Beauty')
6 Mauve flowers of *Nepeta racemosa* 'Walker's Low' or *Lythrum virgatum*
7 Tall yellow flowers of *Silphium laciniatum*
8 *Astilbe chinensis* var. *taquetii* 'Purpurlanze'
9 *Panicum virgatum* 'Shenandoah'
10 *Deschampsia cespitosa*

Reader recommends **Chinese dogwood**

This year, I have had a major star performer in my garden – the Chinese dogwood, *Cornus kousa* var. *chinensis* 'China Girl' (pictured right). I saw it first at Chelsea, after which I planted one. No luck – it died. Then I got another. It flourished, and this year it had masses of white star flowers in springtime. They lasted for about a month, looked gorgeous, and even died quite nicely. Lots of my friends enjoyed their beauty. It then performed as a pretty-leaved, slender tree for the summer. Suddenly it was covered with red fruits, adorning the tree as if it was Christmas. They lasted and lasted. I searched my books but could not find out about them. After a visit to RHS Wisley I realised you could actually eat them. The one I ate was yummy.
Jilly Charkin, Surrey

CAROLE DRAKE / GAP PHOTOS

Win and tonic

What a lovely surprise. I opened the latest edition of GARDENS ILLUSTRATED to find my name in print as your star letter. I was so excited I had to open my small can of Marks & Spencer gin and tonic (it's OK, the sun was over the yard-arm). Thank you so much. The last thing I won was a home acupuncture kit in 1998, so things are definitely looking up.
Sheila Godman, Edinburgh

We reserve the right to edit correspondence. □

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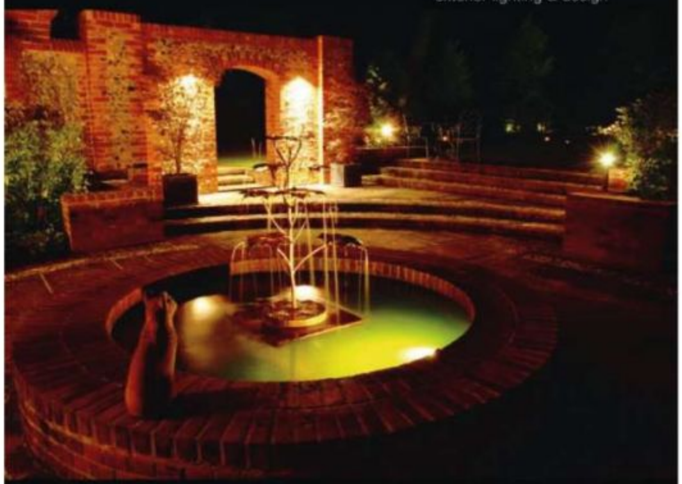

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Candle Lanterns : Pigs & Others

I'M MUCKING OUT
WE'RE LOUNGING BY THE POOL
I'M IN THE DOG HOUSE
BEWARE OF THE CAT
I'M IN THE GARDEN
BEWARE OF THE GARDENER
I'M DOWN THE PUB

Hanging Wooden Signs : 50 Texts

BACK DOOR
BEACH HUT
LAWN MOWER
SHED
DUNGEON
PRIVY
BICYCLES
BARN
TOOL SHED
COTTAGE

Wooden Keyrings : 70 Locations

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TELEVISION

SECRETS OF BRITAIN'S GREAT GARDENS

Alan Titchmarsh returns to our screens this autumn in *Alan's Garden Secrets*, a series celebrating England's gardening heritage. In each of the four programmes Alan visits a well-known garden to explore its place in garden history. From the formal 17th-century gardens at Hatfield House in Hertfordshire to the landscaped grandeur of Stowe in Buckinghamshire (pictured), the Victorian planthunters' splendour at Biddulph Grange in Staffordshire and the 20th-century masterpiece at Sissinghurst Castle in Kent, Alan reveals the story behind their creation, looking at the plants used and design features, and meeting the gardeners who continue to look after these masterpieces. There's hands-on advice, too, with Alan taking ideas from the master gardeners and adapting them for use in our gardens today.

BBC The series is due to start on BBC2 in early November. Check *Radio Times* for details.

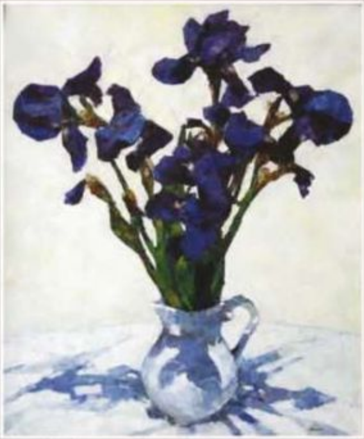
Stowe Landscape Gardens are open at weekends during the winter; the parkland is open daily. 01494 755568, www.nationaltrust.org.uk

NTPL / ROD EDWARDS

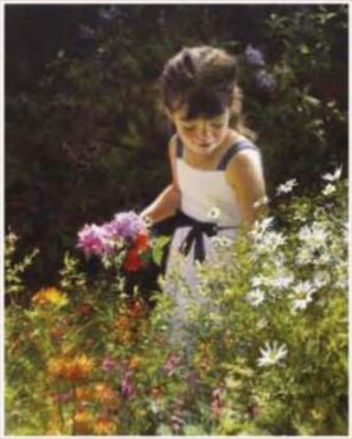
JAMES FINE ART

Exhibition of paintings
by
Eva Adams
Ken Moroney
Tony Sheath

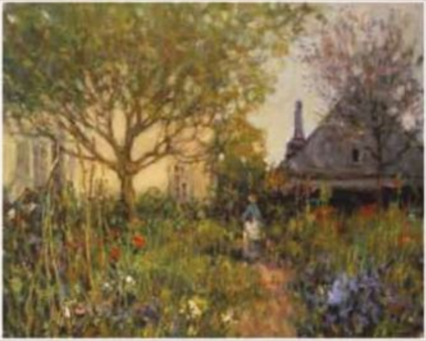
Catalogues available on request
or can be viewed online



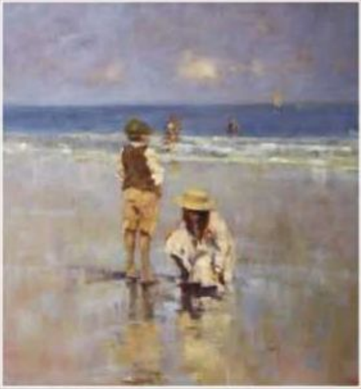
Eva Adams, Russian
'Cool Impressions'
Signed oil on canvas, 24" x 20"



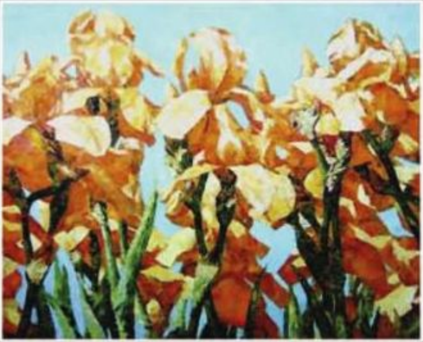
Tony Sheath, British
'Maddie'
Signed oil on canvas, 20" x 16"



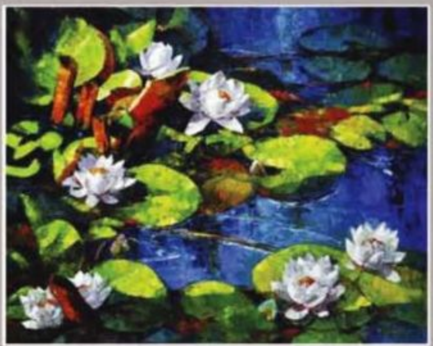
Ken Moroney, British
'The Garden'
Signed oil on board, 16" x 20"



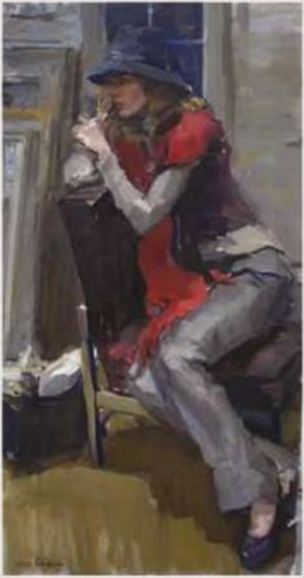
Ken Moroney, British
'Reflection on the Beach'
Signed oil on board
16" x 15"



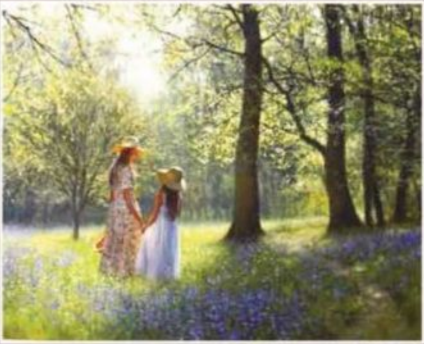
Eva Adams, Russian
'Golden Irises'
Signed oil on canvas, 32" x 39"



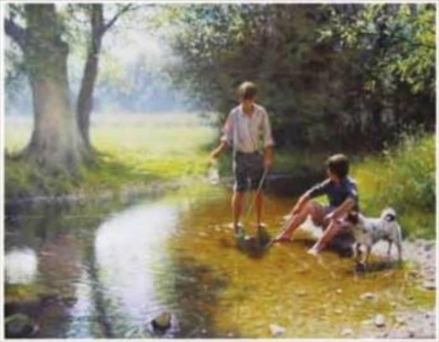
Eva Adams, Russian
'Morning Pond'
Signed oil on canvas, 32" x 40"



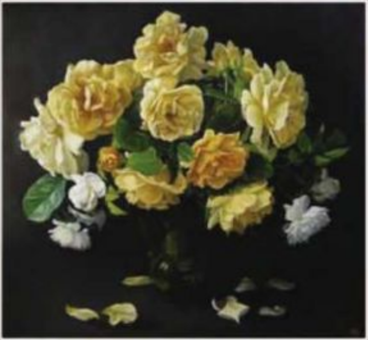
Valeriy Gridnev, Russian
'Girl in Hat with Red Shawl'
Signed oil on board
23" x 12"



Tony Sheath, British
'The Glade'
Signed oil on canvas, 16" x 20"



Tony Sheath, British
'Sticklebacks'
Signed oil on canvas
16" x 20"



Raquel Sardina, Spanish
'Apricot Roses'
Signed oil on canvas
23" x 25"

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Media

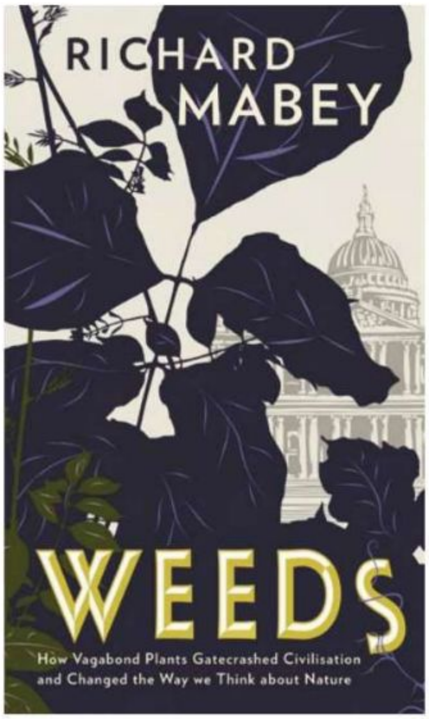
TELEVISION

- ***Gardeners' World*** The team make the most of autumn, collecting leaves to make leafmould, visiting Stourhead for the colourful displays of historic trees, planting bulbs as inspired by Anna Pavord's visit to Hanham Court and generally preparing the garden for winter. Fridays, 8pm, BBC2.
- ***Edwardian Farm*** Following on from last year's Victorian Farm, the new series sees the same presenters experience farming life at the turn of the 20th century – an age of inventors, entrepreneurs and social change. BBC2, starting early November. Look out for confirmed details.
- ***Alan's Garden Secrets*** Four-part series with Alan Titchmarsh considering our gardening heritage and how it continues to influence garden design today. See also page 12.

RADIO

- ***Gardeners' Question Time*** Topical tips and advice from the expert panel with visits this month to meet the winner of the Thrive Blind Gardener of the Year and to Fletcher Moss Gardens in Manchester, birthplace of the RSPB (see also page 108). Fridays 3pm, BBC Radio 4 (repeated Sundays 2pm).
- ***Saving Species*** Conservationist and broadcaster Brett Westwood explores biodiversity, conservation and natural history, reporting live from home and afar. Tuesdays, 11am, BBC Radio 4. See also www.bbc.co.uk/savingspecies

NOTE Programme details correct at time of going to press but dates and times are subject to change.


RICHARD MABEY
WEEDS
How Vagabond Plants Gatecrashed Civilisation and Changed the Way we Think about Nature

One man's weed...

Naturalist Richard Mabey wants us to rethink our attitude to weeds. For most gardeners they are a scourge, trespassing across the boundary between the wild and domestic; in other situations they are considered pioneering and beautiful – reclaiming our abandoned wastelands. It's a paradox that he investigates in his latest book *Weeds* and will be discussing at a number of events this month. **Southwold** Literary Festival, 12 November, www.wayswithwords.co.uk; **RHS Wisley**, 14 November, www.rhs.org.uk; **University of Oxford Botanic Garden**, 25 November, www.botanic-garden.ox.ac.uk; **Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew**, 1 December, www.kew.org.uk.

- *Weeds: how vagabond plants gatecrashed civilisation and changed the way we think about nature,* Profile Books, £15 (see our review of the book, issue 166, page 97).

IRRESISTIBLE ZINNIA Following hot on the heels of the dahlia's return to garden favour, zinnias are once again finding friends and turning heads in the garden. We're rather taken by the new offering in the latest Thompson and Morgan catalogue, *Zinnia elegans* 'Purple Prince'. It flowers all summer long with double, pink-purple blooms on tall stems. Good in the border and as a cut flower. 100 seeds cost £1.49. Tel 0844 573 1818, www.thompson-morgan.com

Tickets are now on sale for next year's RHS shows, including the Chelsea Flower Show and Hampton Court Palace Flower Show. Tel 0844 338 7526, www.rhs.org.uk/flowershows

Autumnwatch

Don't let the season pass you by without noticing its precious key moments. BBC *Autumnwatch* is there to help you experience some of the highlights. The programme is in full swing reporting on wildlife happenings in the countryside and in our gardens, tracking the year's progression from summer through to winter. Sister programme *Autumnwatch Unsprung* will allow viewers to add their own comments and observations.

BBC *Autumnwatch* continues until 25 November, BBC2, 8.30pm. Followed by *Autumnwatch Unsprung* at 9.30pm.

HEDGEHOG: CORBIS / PHOTOLIBRARY

NOSEY PARKER

Ruth Brooks

A retired teacher, Ruth spent six months investigating the homing instinct of snails. Her findings revealed a high rate of return over a distance of 30 metres

What is your earliest gardening memory My mother, who was passionate about gardening, suffered from an allergy to the *Primulaceae* family and this made a huge impression on me. I felt very responsible and protective towards her and from an early age would do the gardening. **How about your own garden now?** I'm in Devon with a sloping garden. I grow runner beans, swiss chard, blackcurrants, – and there's a few flower bed, but that brings us to the snails…

What about snails? As a child I used to race snails with my best friend, but my fascination turned to hatred when I became a gardener. I became obsessed with finding ways to dispose of them but nothing seemed to work – I've spent a fortune on beer, which the snails merely had a jolly good drink of before heading into the garden for dinner. So I felt I needed to find out more about them. **You asked for help from others – who got involved?** People all over the world sent in results but I'm particularly pleased that my local school took part. **Do you have a new respect for snails?** I've come round full circle and back to finding them fascinating little creatures. We recommended moving snails over 100m away – I now want to do more experimentation to verify our suggestion. **Who would you most like to have dinner with?** The scientist Marie Curie (right) – I read her biography *The Radium Woman* when I was about 12 and she caught my imagination. **Not a lot of people know this about me…** I've been an avid *Archers* listener since the programme began.

BBC Ruth Brooks took part in the *So You Want to be a Scientist?* initiative set up by BBC Radio 4's science programme *Material World* (Thursdays, 4.30pm). For more on Ruth's snail experiment and to see her findings go to www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/features/so-you-want-to-be-a-scientist.

Diary

- ***Successional bulb planting*** Lucy Boyd, head gardener at Petersham House, shares ideas for bulb planting to give flowers from February through to May. 9 November, 10am-1pm, £25. Petersham Nurseries, off Petersham Road, Richmond, Surrey TW10 7AG. Tel 020 8940 5230, www.petershamnurseries.com
- ***Garden Design Course*** Award winning designers lead an informal course to help you create unique designs for gardens of all sizes. 13-14 November, 9.30am-5pm, £195. Contact course tutors for details; Adam Frost (01780 764700), or David Stevens (01280 821097). Held at Barnsdale Gardens, Exton, Oakham, Rutland LE15 8AH. www.barnsdalegardens.co.uk
- ***Make hedges work*** Choosing the right species and maintaining for success. 24 November, 9.15am-5pm, £93. West Dean College, Nr Chichester, West Sussex PO18 0QZ. Tel 01243 811301, www.westdean.org.uk/college
- ***Meet the Waxcaps*** Join a led walk to look at multicoloured display of grassland fungi. 7 November, 2-3pm, free as part of garden entry. National Botanic Garden of Wales, Carmarthenshire SA32 8HG. Tel 01558 668768, www.gardenofwales.org.uk

3 of the best websites for

CHRISTMAS DECORATION COURSES

www.kitchen-garden-hens.co.uk

Francine Raymond hosts inspirational craft days at her home using garden finds to make stylish decorations.

www.thegardenstation.co.uk

A range of courses including Christmas crafts, run from a charming old railway station in Northumberland.

www.woho.co.uk

Sculptor Julieann Worrall Hood runs courses on willow and wire weaving. Stars and hearts feature for Christmas.

GARDEN
OPEN

Open Garden

If you're planning to open your garden to visitors next year make sure you're listed on a new website resource, the Open Gardens UK National Directory. Set up by two seasoned open garden organisers, the site allows you to add dates, times and details of open gardens. A great way to plan and promote your event – and a fantastic way for garden enthusiasts to find out about the huge choice of gardens to visit nationwide. www.opengardens.co.uk

BEER GLASS: ICP / ALAMY. MARIE CURIE: PHOTO RESEARCHERS / ALAMY. OPEN GARDEN: ASPERRA GARDEN DESIGN / ALAMY

READER TRIP TO GERMANY

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> "The Germans have long valued their environment and there is deep respect for anything that combines good design and technical skill"
> NOËL KINGSBURY

Explore the gardens of Germany

Join internationally renowned writer and lecturer Noël Kingsbury on a tour of some of the most celebrated gardens in northern Europe – **22-28 June 2011**

NOËL KINGSBURY

Plantsman and writer Noël Kingsbury is an advocate of quality public planting using a broadly naturalistic approach to his planting designs. He writes regular articles for publications including *The Daily Telegraph* and *Gardens Illustrated*.

This unique opportunity promises to capture the imagination of all garden enthusiasts. The tour encompasses gardens of great historic interest and superb innovation within Berlin and Potsdam.

We begin in Berlin, considered one of the world's greenest cities. Its varied history has left a rich legacy from aristocratic pleasure grounds to modern 'pocket parks'; there's the Berlin Botanical Garden – home to 22,000 plant species, the World Heritage Site of Peacock Island on the river Spree and Daniel Libeskind's 'deconstructivist' garden for the new Jewish Museum.

After three days in Berlin, the party makes the short drive to Potsdam and visits Sanssouci Gardens, the epicentre of an ensemble of palaces and parks built for Frederick the Great during the 18th century. A particular highlight will be the early 20th-century garden of influential nurseryman and writer Karl Foerster, famed for his naturalistic garden style. On a more contemporary note there's also a visit to Bornstedter-Feld Park, a derelict military training ground now reclaimed as a public green space.

The tour continues with a visit to Wörlitz Park and its unforgettable 18th-century 'garden kingdom' created by Prince Franz von Anhalt-Dessau, before the final flourish of a special visit to the research grounds and private garden of one of Germany's most innovative horticulturists, Prof. Dr Wolfram Kircher, much of whose work focuses on sustainability. □

Tour information

THE GARDENS OF BERLIN AND POTSDAM TOUR
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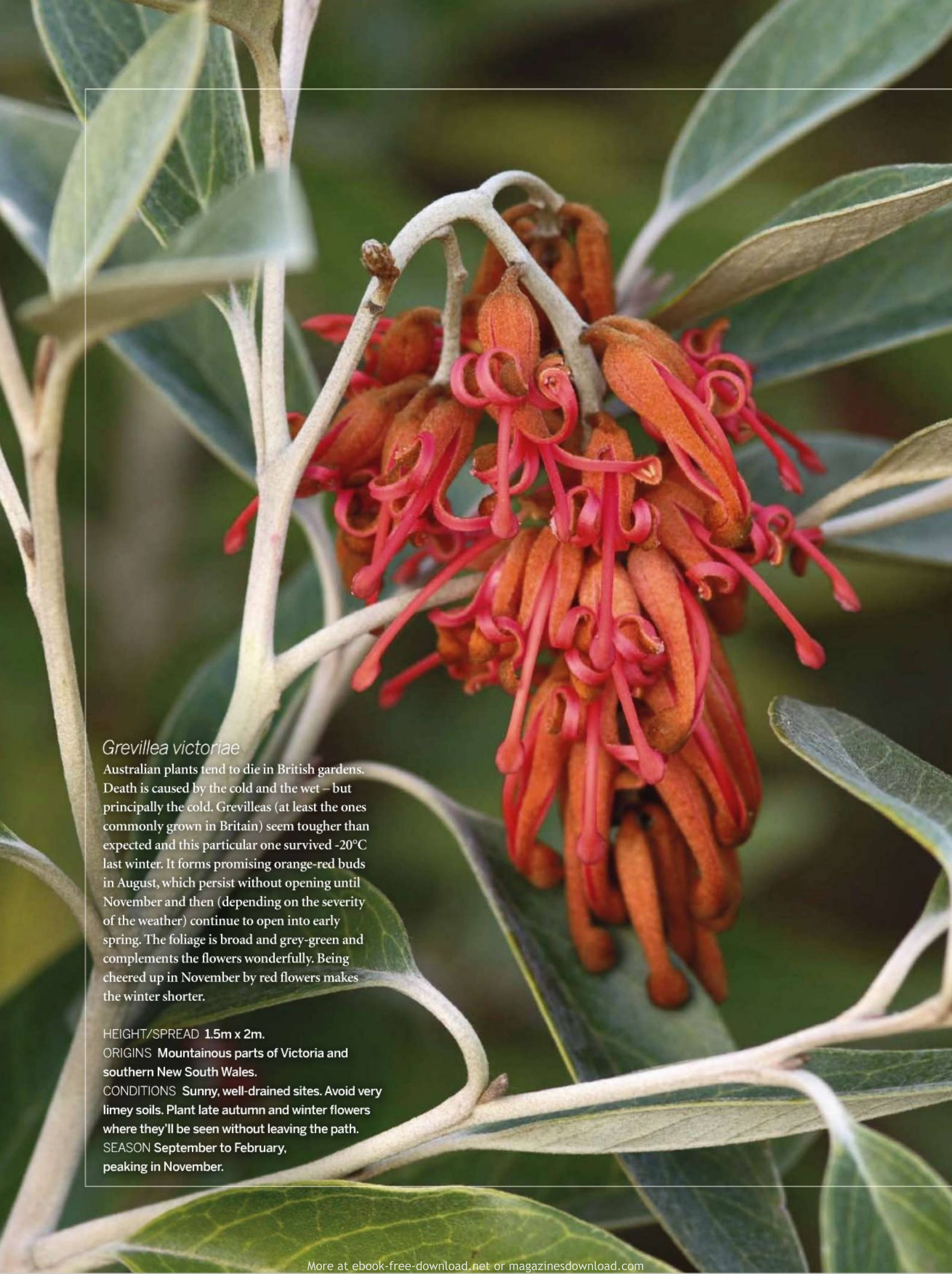


Grevillea victoriae

Australian plants tend to die in British gardens. Death is caused by the cold and the wet – but principally the cold. Grevilleas (at least the ones commonly grown in Britain) seem tougher than expected and this particular one survived -20°C last winter. It forms promising orange-red buds in August, which persist without opening until November and then (depending on the severity of the weather) continue to open into early spring. The foliage is broad and grey-green and complements the flowers wonderfully. Being cheered up in November by red flowers makes the winter shorter.

HEIGHT/SPREAD **1.5m x 2m.**
ORIGINS **Mountainous parts of Victoria and southern New South Wales.**
CONDITIONS **Sunny, well-drained sites. Avoid very limey soils. Plant late autumn and winter flowers where they'll be seen without leaving the path.**
SEASON **September to February, peaking in November.**

November plants

Bring some extra late-season colour to your garden with flowers that bloom deep into autumn

WORDS **BOB BROWN** PHOTOGRAPHS **TORIE CHUGG**

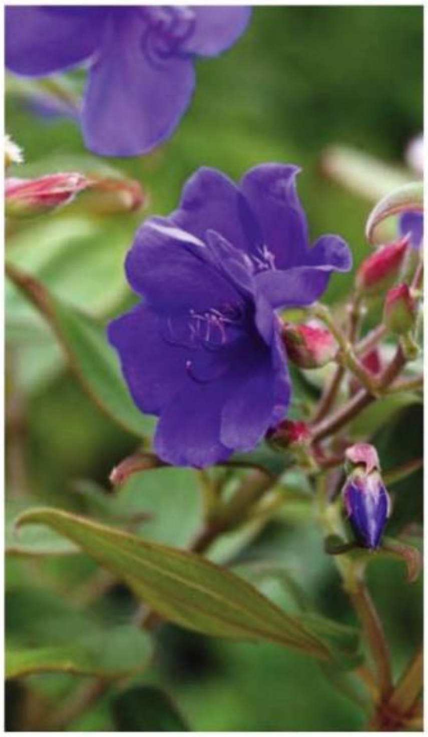
CHARLIE HOPKINSON

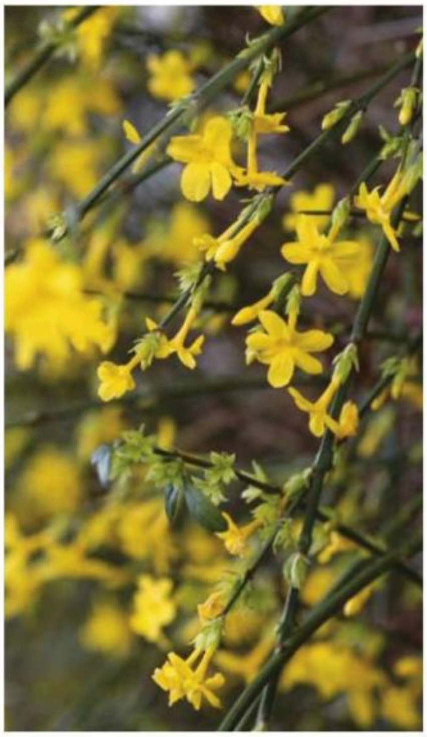
Bob Brown owns Cotswold Garden Flowers, a mecca for plant lovers, which stocks a huge range of rare and beautiful plants

Tibouchina urvilleana 'Edwardsii'

This is not hardy and gets gawky after about a year of growth, but its flowers and foliage more than compensate. The flowers (especially in this form) are large and intensely purple. Each leaf is covered in velvet-like hairs that catch the light. In the variegated form the foliage is cream and green with a red flush. Prune it hard back just before it starts growing in spring to reduce the gawkiness.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 1-3m x 75cm (or well pruned 1m x 1m).
ORIGINS Brazil.
CONDITIONS Plant in pots that can be stood outside from May to November. Move to well-lit, cool but frost-free place in winter.
SEASON Foliage all year, flowers July to December (to February with some heat).

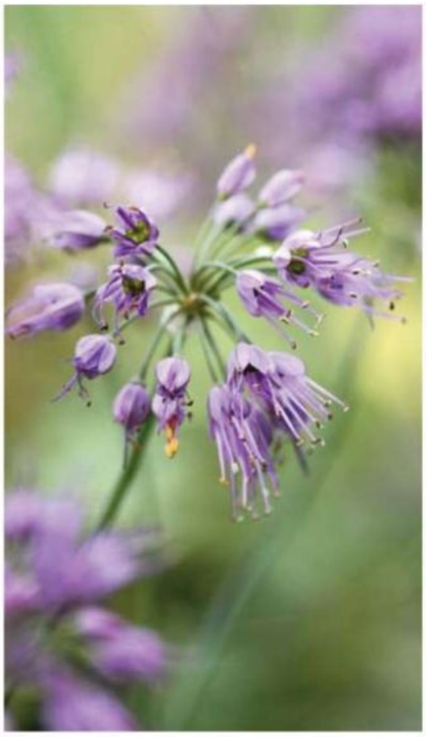




Jasminum nudiflorum

OK, you all know this plant, but its ubiquity doesn't lessen its charm. Can you imagine the wonder it induced when it first appeared in the mid-19th century? Its conspicuous, long, dark green stems make a wonderful background for the clear yellow flowers. It's at its best in November. Don't forget to give it a haircut every spring with shears and you'll get the shapeliest winter effect. Make a note in your new diary.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 3m x 3m or limitless, with neglect.
ORIGINS China.
CONDITIONS Up walls or down banks.
SEASON Late October to December with smatterings of flower into January.



Allium thunbergii 'Ozawa'

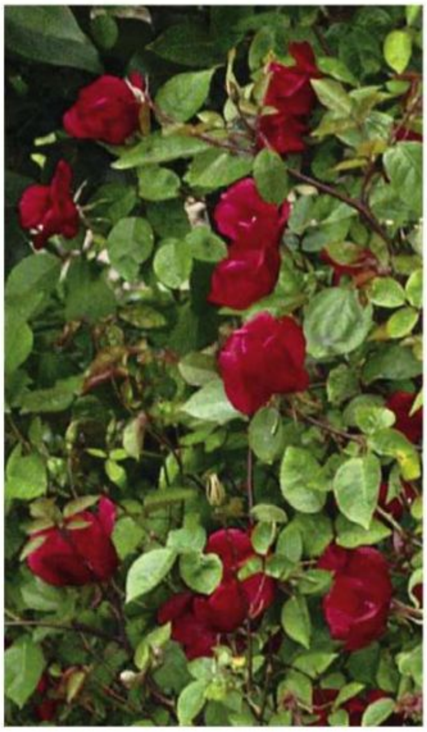
This is a neat plant with cheerful bright purple flowers. The neatness is not so extreme that it's of interest to alpinists but it needs not to be smothered by bossier border plants. Mine grows atop a stone wall where I can defend it against the ingress of *Bergenia* and *Sedum* foliage, and the greyness of the wall sets off the colour well. It seems impervious to early frosts and even early snow. Most alliums bloom in spring or early summer. This brings a breath of spring just when it's needed.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 20cm x 20cm.
ORIGINS Japan and Korea.
CONDITIONS Plant it in pots or borders where it will not be smothered.
SEASON October to December.

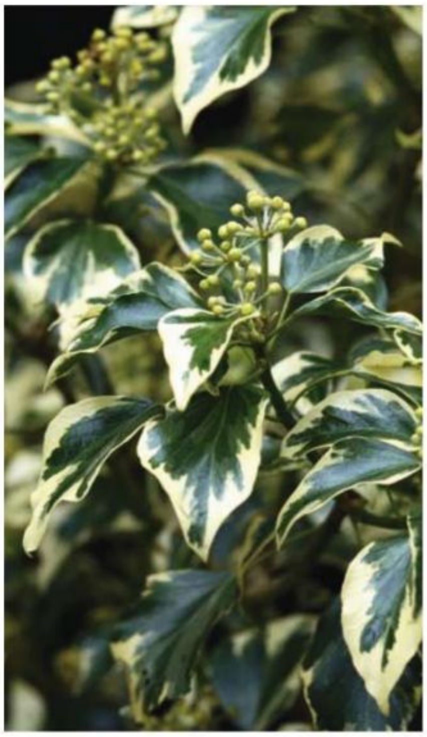
Rosa x odorata 'Bengal Crimson'

"Don't you know it?" Helen Dillon asked me in her Dublin garden in 1996. "Have some cuttings." They all rooted. Subsequently I discovered this plant's strange habits. It produces masses of flowers about five times a year, with a few in between. In the shelter of the Chelsea Physic Garden the November and February bloomings are unbelievable. If planted against a wall it goes straight up and does its thing at the top. The foliage, branching and flowers are airy and delicate. Few thorns.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 2m x 1.75m or taller against a wall.
ORIGINS China.
CONDITIONS A sunny spot. I grow it in gravely loam and clay equally well.
SEASON March to December.



BOB BROWN



Hedera helix 'Cavendishii Latina'

Ivy is barely appreciated on its home turf. The rest of the world spends lots of money trying to grow what it calls 'English ivy'. OK, it can be destructive: I've seen it fallen off the front of a cottage, complete with the rendering. But it has colourful, shapely evergreen foliage, grows in terrible places (like dry shade) and is a climber that requires no support. You'll appreciate it most if you grow the non-climbing, shrubby kinds created by rooting cuttings of top growth. 'Cavendishii Latina' is a darling.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 1m x 1m.
ORIGINS Europe.
CONDITIONS A tough plant that will tolerate even dry shade.
SEASON All year, but the November flowers are particularly good.

Places to visit

Bob Brown names some of his favourite gardens and other places to see plants at their best.

Normally autumn colour is at its best in the first week of November. Choose the right weather (light rain and a gloomy light can accentuate the foliage effects) and head for **Westonbirt**, near Tetbury, Gloucestershire GL8 8QS. Open daily. Tel 01666 880220, www.forestry.gov.uk/westonbirt. **Batsford Arboretum** is smaller but has better views. Near Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire GL56 9QB. Open daily, 9am-6pm (4pm from 1 December). Tel 01386 701441, www.batsarb.co.uk

Batsford Arboretum

CLIVE NICHOLS / GAP PHOTOS

Vistas and autumn colour enrich the **Savill Garden** too, but here you'll find late border perennials and glasshouses as well. Every season is the right one to visit this garden.

Galanthus elwesii var. *monostictus* Hiemalis Group

Snowdrops are effective, cheering and important. Ones that have better foliage, bigger flowers or extend the season are worth seeking out. This extends the season at the beginning (when there are fewer attractions) by starting to bloom in November (sometimes October or December). The blooms last until the rest of your snowdrops start to open. It's a toughie, so will survive almost anywhere if it can get some winter sun. I plant it by the path among (dormant) agapanthus.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 12cm x 15cm from a single bulb after three to five years.
ORIGINS Turkey.
CONDITIONS Heavier soils seem to suit them better than light sandy ones.
SEASON (October) November to January.

Nerine 'Zeal Giant'

The quality of hardiness in nerines depends on winter dormancy and leafing from spring to autumn (rather than over winter). These characteristics are evident in *Nerine bowdenii* but whatever cultivar you grow, its flowers are samey. The late Terry Jones crossed *N. bowdenii* with the enriched colours of the winter-leafing and tender *N. sarniensis*, aiming for richer colours and hardiness. He famously selected this hardy hybrid, which has huge flowers on long stems that I gather in armfuls for the house.

- See issue 166 for our *Plant profile* on nerines.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 75cm x 15cm from a single bulb but clumps up.
ORIGINS A hybrid of South African species.
CONDITIONS Plant them anywhere (in sun) where they will not be crowded.
SEASON October to November.

Chrysanthemum 'Marion'

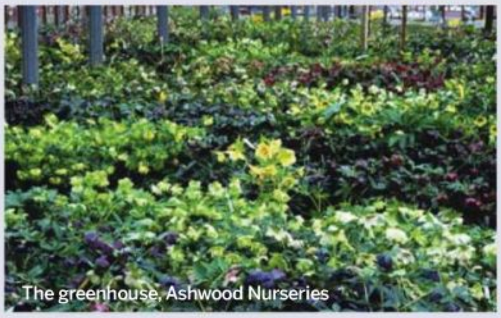
The latest blooming chrysanths are important for my psyche. If in mid-November I can still look forward to flowers that haven't opened it helps me cross the winter chasm to January excitements. This has traditional chestnut-coloured flowers enlivened by an orange suffusion. Plant enough to pick for the house and breath in the sweet perfume followed some days (or even weeks) later by the more normal smell of chrysanthemums. Most hardy chrysanths are shapely and compact and require no support. This is no exception.

- See also our *Plant profile* about hardy chrysanthemums on page 50.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 55cm x 55cm.
ORIGINS China and Japan.
CONDITIONS Any soil, in full sun.
SEASON November to December.

Wick Lane, Egham, Surrey TW20 0UU. Open daily, 10am-4.30pm; Tel 01784 435 544, www.theroyallandscape.co.uk

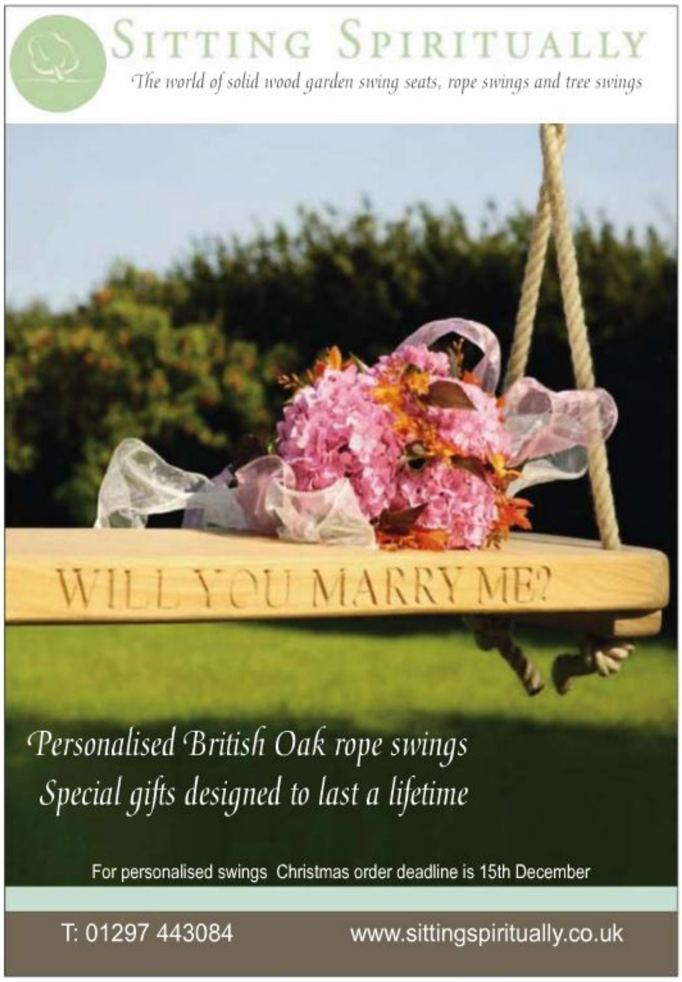
Garden centres that grow some of their own plants can be wonderful places. If they breed and select plants as well they necessitate a visit. I regularly visit **Ashwood Nurseries** and I'm entranced and engaged by the plants I see, and they're all available to buy. Owner John Massey loves breeding salvias for autumn, and hellebores, hepaticas and cyclamen for winter. Get in the queue early. Food in the cafe is homemade and superb, too. Ashwood, Kingswinford, West Midlands DY6 0AE. Open daily 8.30am-5pm (except Sunday, 9am-5pm). Tel 01384 401 996, www.ashwood-nurseries.co.uk



The greenhouse, Ashwood Nurseries

NICOLA STOCKEN TOMKINS / GARDEN COLLECTION

After lunch head northwest for **Bridgemere Nursery,** which also grows a large proportion of the plants it sells. It's large enough (the largest in the world?) to walk off lunch and be ready for tea, which is also homemade and good. Bridgemere, Cheshire CW5 7QB. Open daily, 9am-6pm. Tel 01270 521100, www.bridgemere.co.uk



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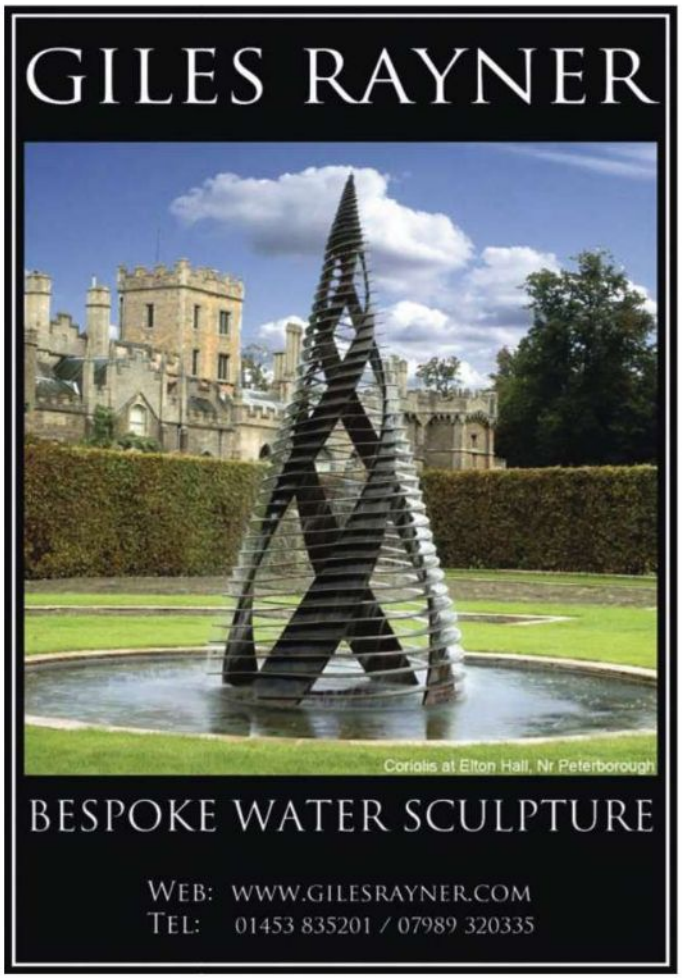

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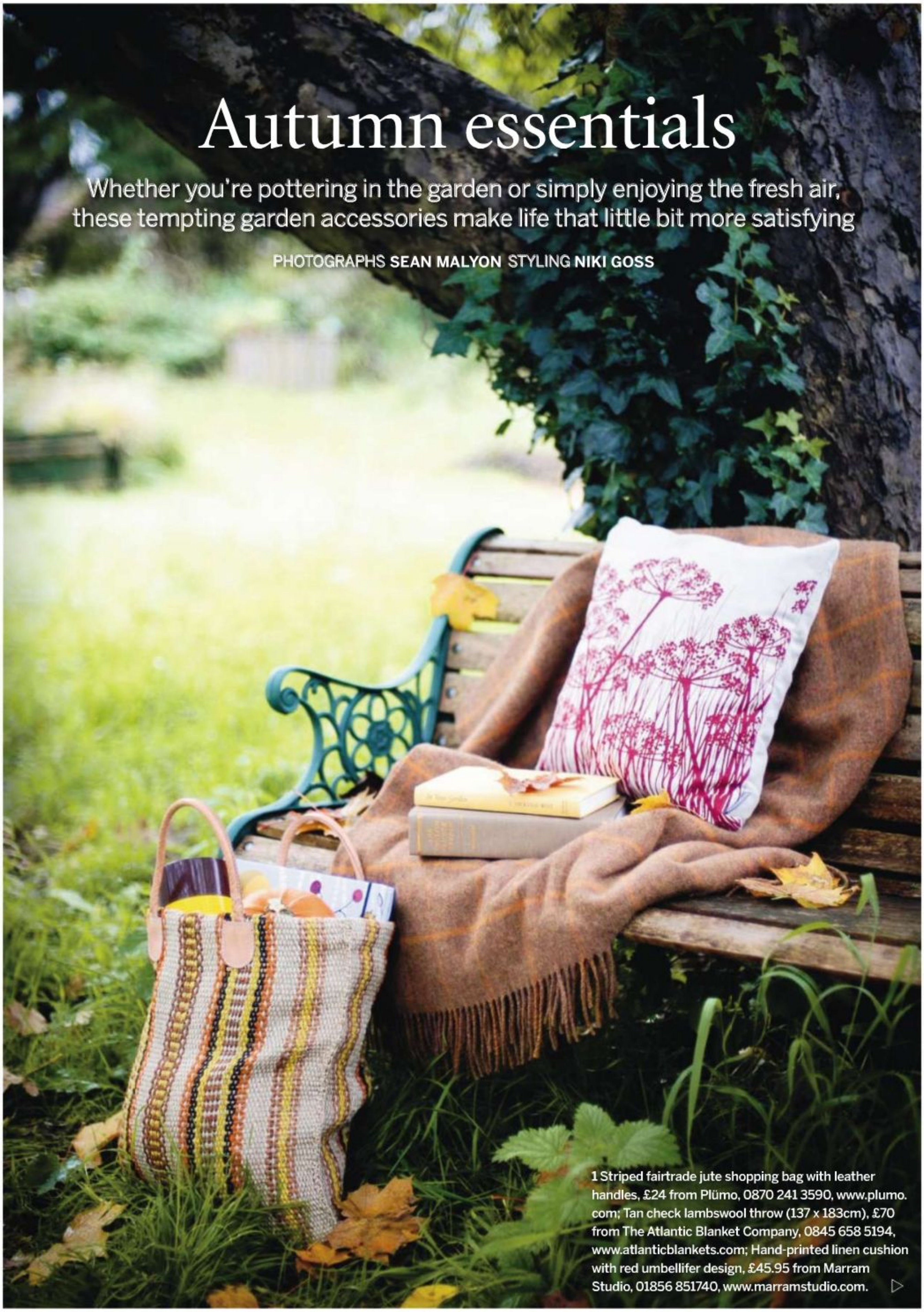
Autumn essentials

Whether you're pottering in the garden or simply enjoying the fresh air, these tempting garden accessories make life that little bit more satisfying

PHOTOGRAPHS **SEAN MALYON** STYLING **NIKI GOSS**



1 Striped fairtrade jute shopping bag with leather handles, £24 from Plümo, 0870 241 3590, www.plumo.com; Tan check lambswool throw (137 x 183cm), £70 from The Atlantic Blanket Company, 0845 658 5194, www.atlanticblankets.com; Hand-printed linen cushion with red umbellifer design, £45.95 from Marram Studio, 01856 851740, www.marramstudio.com. ▷

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▷ **2** The '**Easy Grabber**' from Crocus makes light work of scooping fallen leaves and garden debris. £19.99, 0844 557 2233, www.crocus.co.uk

3 These miniature **deadhead snips** (just 10.5cm long) slip neatly into your pocket so they're always at hand for nipping off spent flowers to prolong the show. £3.95 from Harrod Horticultural, 0845 402 5300, www.harrodhorticultural.com

4 Give the birds their own rustic roost this autumn with this quirky caravan **birdhouse**, £14.99 from Firebox, 0844 922 1010, www.firebox.com

5 Stylish and portable 'R1 MkII' DAB **radio** with walnut veneer, £159.99, plus battery pack, £49.99, available with a luxurious tan (shown) or black leather carry case, £39.99, all from Vita Audio, 01702 601410, www.vitaaudio.com for stockists.

6 Add some atmosphere to your garden with these **glass lanterns** in sultry colours. The simple curved jars (front) come in a set of four, for £18, while the patterned glass lanterns (behind) cost £11.50 each, all from Primrose & Plum, 01428 643040, www.primroseandplum.co.uk☐

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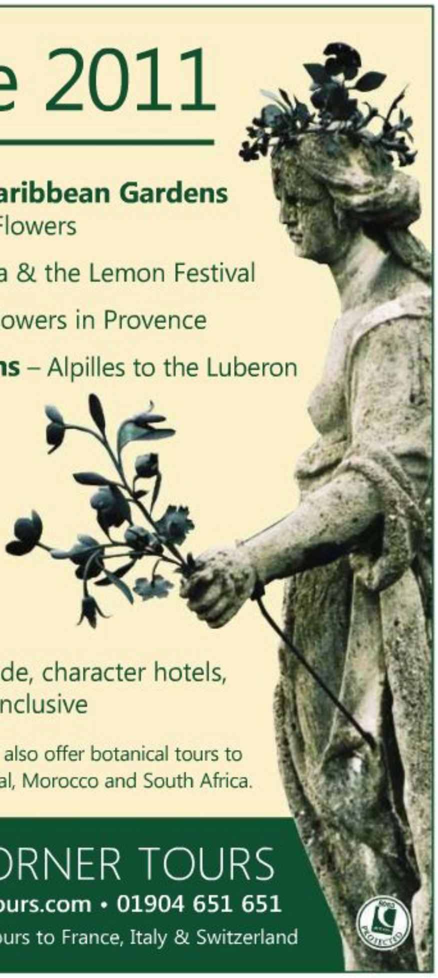

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Broad beans

They may not be exotic, but they are a delicious staple crop that should give a healthy surplus for your freezer, if you follow Ays Fowler's essential growing guide

WORDS **ALYS FOWLER** ILLUSTRATIONS **KERRY LEMON**

Broad beans (*Vicia faba*) are a venerable crop. Ancient caches of dried beans have turned up in archeological sites around North Africa, the Mediterranean and China. Their precise origin is a little murky, but we do know that people have grown them as food since 6,000 BC. They became popular because they are easy to grow, high in protein and store well. They also help prevent soil erosion, because they over-winter well, protecting the soil with their roots and foliage. And as part of the pea family, their nitrogen-fixing roots feed the crops that follow them.

It's easy to get carried away with unusual vegetables such as yacons and ocas (both South American root crops). In that excitement, you forget the point of growing. What you want, in the end, is a bountiful supply of fresh vegetables.

> “if you do sow in autumn, you'll have the pleasure of something green in your garden during the winter”

In such exotic company the broad bean can get a little lost. It's handsome, but not noticeably so; it's tasty, but cook it wrongly and it will taste bitter. Get it right, though, and you see why it's an old favourite. A good crop will give you plenty to eat fresh and a healthy surplus for the freezer. You can eat the beans at all stages, from slender pods the size of your little fingers, cooked whole, to fat beans that need to be shelled and peeled.

When to sow

Sow broad beans either in spring or autumn – around the beginning of November, when the soil is still warm enough for germination. Be careful, though – sowing in November can be a bit of a gamble. You'll need a sheltered spot out of freezing winds. On top of that, mice love the big fat beans you sow with. Slugs like the young shoots. And too much rain will cause the beans to rot.

Beside, spring-sown broad beans quickly catch up with winter-sown ones, and the harvest gap is often a matter of only a week. But if you do sow in autumn, you'll have the pleasure of having something green in your vegetable garden during the winter. To give yourself the best chance of succeeding with your autumn-sown crop, use the hardy 'Aquadulce Claudia' (see our guide to the best cultivars, overleaf).

How to sow & plant

You can sow direct, but if there are mice in your garden, they will raid the beans you have planted as seeds. Try protecting your seeds from mice (see *Pests & diseases*, overleaf), or sow in large modules in a cold frame. This should guarantee germination. These can be planted out in early spring after being hardened off. Broad beans can be grown in large containers and pots and I have had good results with autumn sowings this way.

Broad beans do best in rich, well-dug soils. Autumn-sown crops need particularly good drainage and some sort of protection from the wind, but can withstand a great deal of frost and snow.

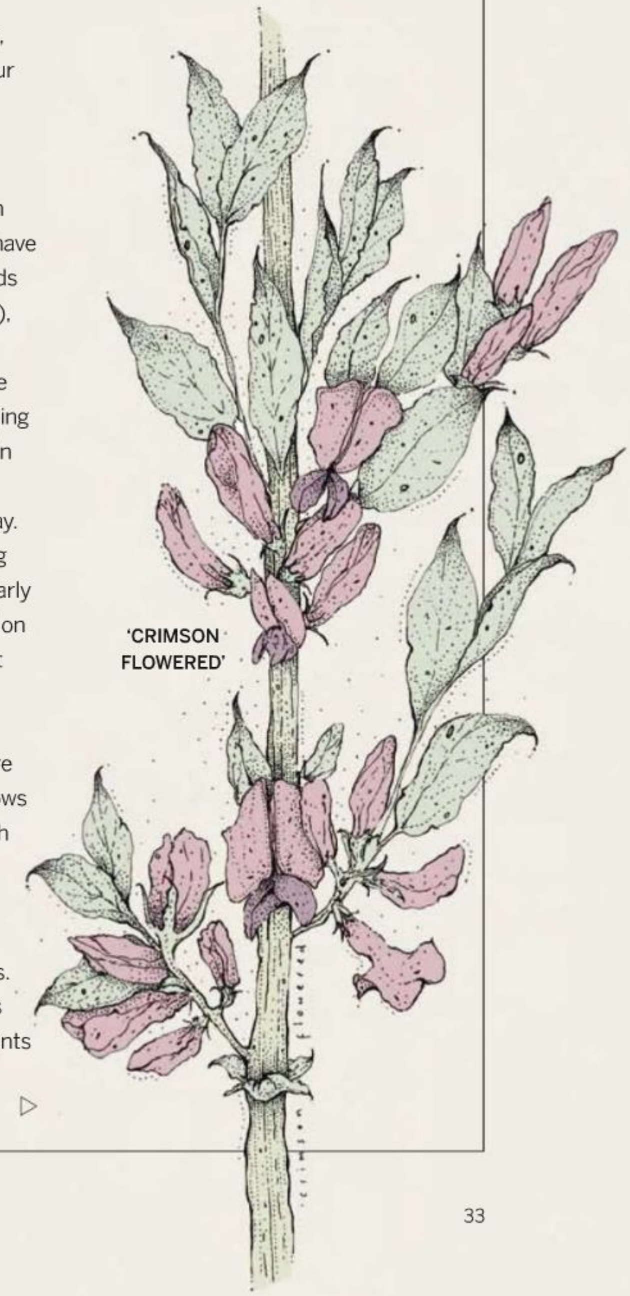
I sow broad beans 4-5cm deep, 20-25cm apart in both directions. A more traditional method is to sow in double rows 25cm apart with 60-90cm between each double row, depending on the cultivar.

Plant care

It is useful to offer support of some sorts. Canes and string work fine, or pea sticks for a more informal look. Broad bean plants have a habit of flopping; if you don't support them, the beans tend to rot.

▷

Alys Fowler studied horticulture at Wisley and Kew before joining *Gardeners' World* in 2006



'CRIMSON FLOWERED'

▷ Once they start to flower, the plants need to be well watered or you will only get a few beans in each pod. As the first flowers begin to set, nip the top of the plant out. This helps thwart black bean aphids, which can colonise a plant and ruin it. If you sow in autumn, your beans may escape an aphid attack. (The young tops of beans can be eaten as spring greens, lightly cooked and covered in butter.)

Harvesting

You can harvest from June to September. It is best to pick young pods a bit bigger than your thumb, as the beans inside these will not have thin, tender skins. Larger beans have thick, bitter skins that need peeling.

Once you have finished harvesting it is possible to cut back the plant to a height of 10cm. Water them well and they often sprout up again, providing a second, smaller crop of tender young beans in September. It is also possible to sow the dwarf cultivar 'The Sutton' in July (as a follow-up to potatoes) to crop in autumn. However, if you have problems with aphids, I would give this a miss or you will just end up perpetuating your aphid population. Instead, cut back the broad bean tops for the compost and dig in the roots, whose nitrogen-fixing nodules will benefit any crops you plant afterwards.

> “the plants need to be well watered or you will only get a few beans in each pod”

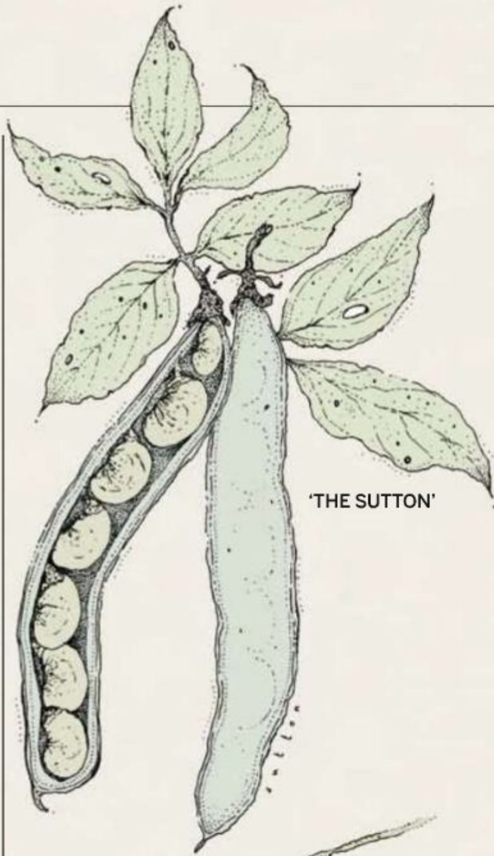
Pests & diseases

If brown spots appear on the leaves, your broad beans may have chocolate spot. Infected plants should be burned. Chocolate spot is particularly bad on plants grown too close together in wet seasons.

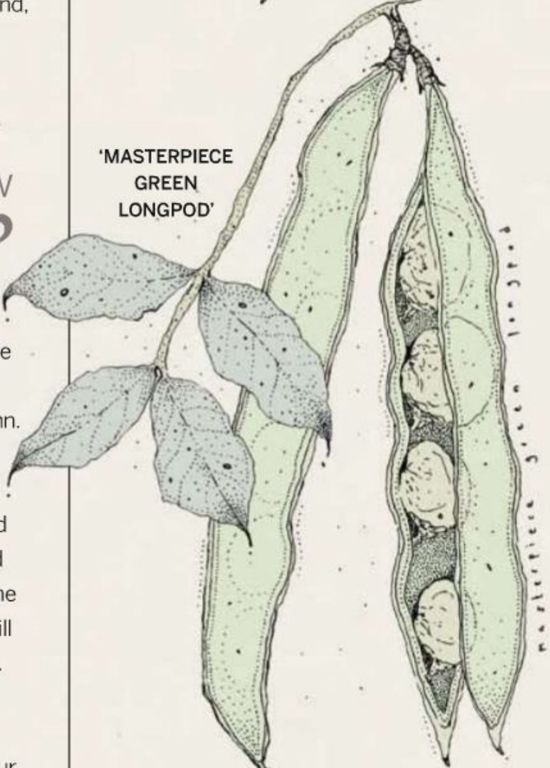
If mice raid the beans you have sown, try covering the beans with holly leaves. These need to be pushed into the ground to make a barrier around the seed.☐

NEXT MONTH Brassicas

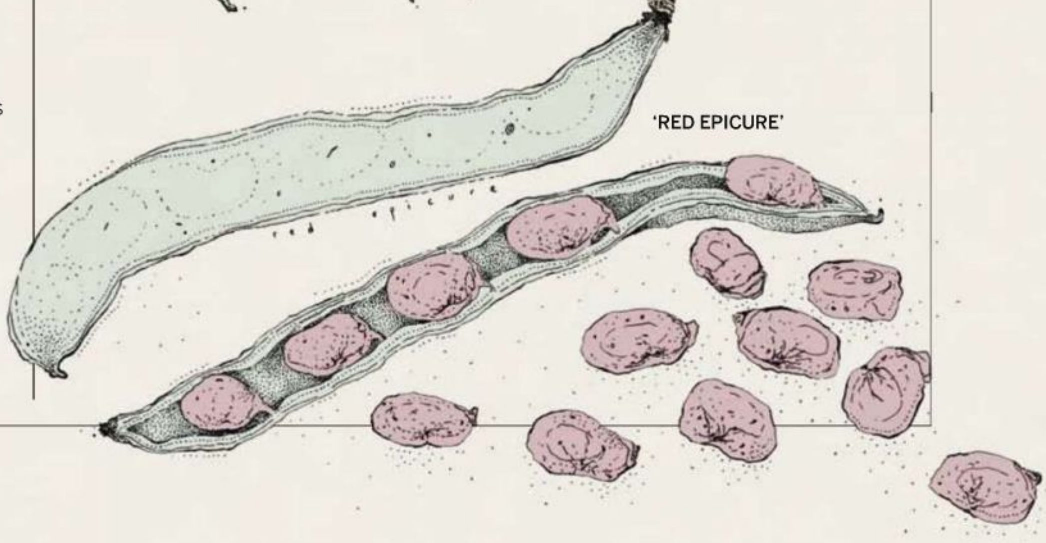
BBC Alys Fowler presents *Gardeners' World* on BBC2, Fridays at 8.30pm.



'THE SUTTON'



'MASTERPIECE GREEN LONGPOD'



'RED EPICURE'

What to plant

Broad beans are divided into three groups: longpods, Windsors (shorter, later maturing beans) and pink-seeded types.

Autumn sowings

'Aquadulce Claudia' is a longpod best for autumn sowing, but it can be sown in spring. It grows to 75cm high.

'The Sutton' is a reliable heavy cropper on a dwarf plant, up to 45cm, so there's no need to stake. It can be sown in autumn or spring and is best for exposed areas or smaller gardens.

Spring sowing

'Express' is an early-maturing cultivar with long pods, each containing five or six whitish-green beans. The beans freeze well.

'Imperial Green Longpod' has exceptional, large pods with up to nine green beans. It crops heavily and needs rich soil.

'Masterpiece Green Longpod' is a reliable cropper with six or seven beans per pod. The beans are particularly good for freezing.

'Stereo' has small pods that you can eat whole. It is a high-yielding cultivar with upright pods for easy picking.

'Stassia' has short pods with white seeds.

'Jade' has bright green beans that keep their colour through cooking and freezing. It produces upright pods for easy picking.

'Witkiem Manita' is the first broad bean to fruit in spring. It's a short-podded cultivar, and is easy to harvest.

'Karmazyn' is a relatively small plant that bears pink seeds, though the colour fades on cooking.

'Red Epicure' is a tall plant bearing pink-seeded beans that have an excellent flavour and freeze well.

'Crimson Flowered' broad bean is a heritage cultivar. It's a small plant whose bright red flowers have a strong, delicious scent. The beans are bright green and have a good, sweet flavour. This cultivar does well in pots and looks lovely in flower borders.

For details of talks and podcasts accompanying the exhibition see:
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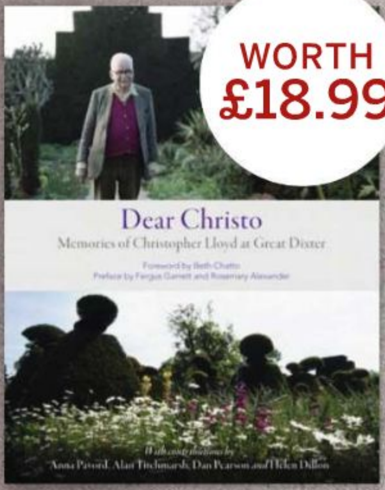
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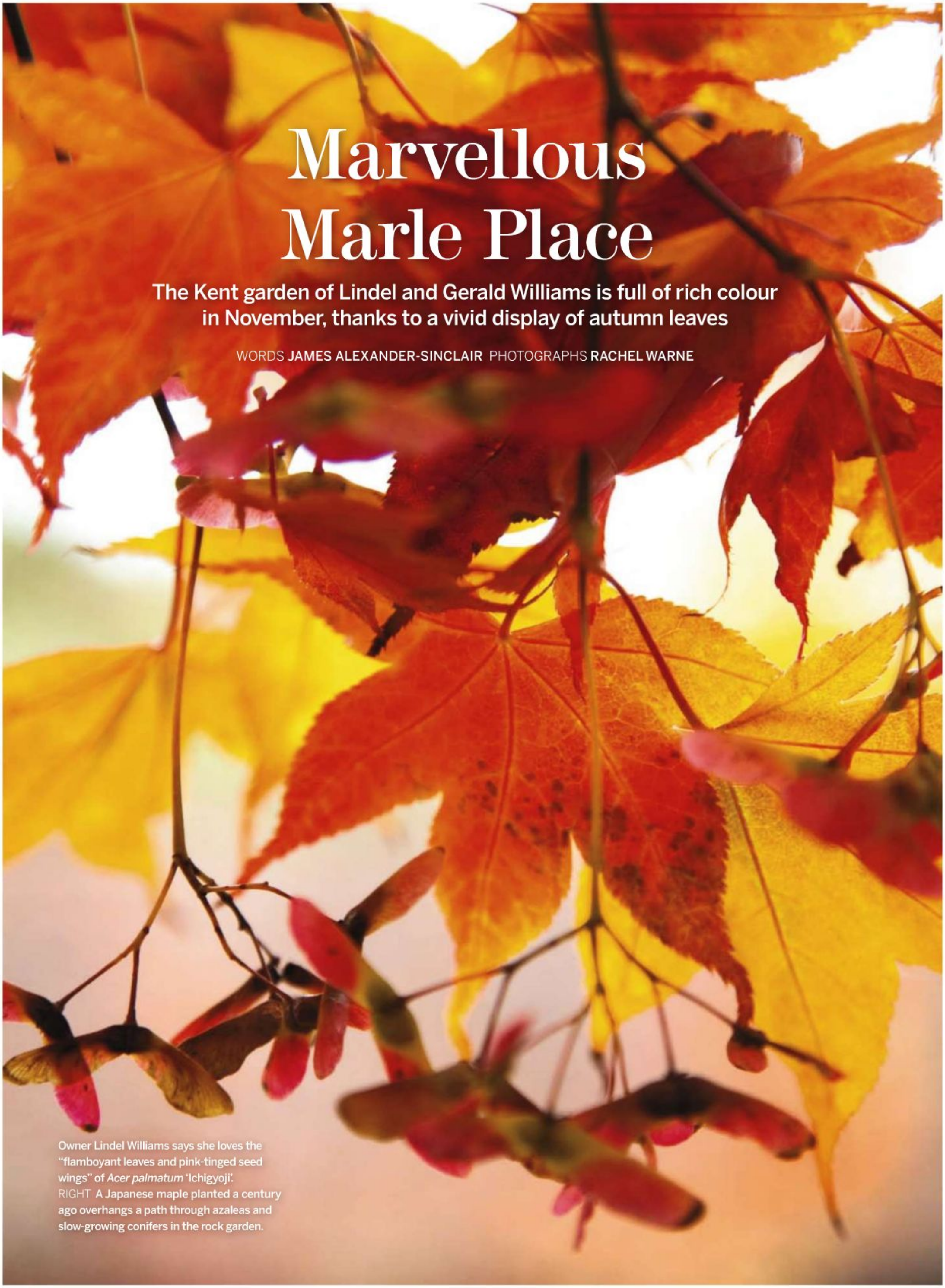
QUOTING GIP167

Marvellous Marle Place

The Kent garden of Lindel and Gerald Williams is full of rich colour in November, thanks to a vivid display of autumn leaves

WORDS **JAMES ALEXANDER-SINCLAIR** PHOTOGRAPHS **RACHEL WARNE**



Owner Lindel Williams says she loves the "flamboyant leaves and pink-tinged seed wings" of *Acer palmatum* 'Ichigyoji'.
RIGHT A Japanese maple planted a century ago overhangs a path through azaleas and slow-growing conifers in the rock garden.

IN BRIEF

WHAT **Marle Place, privately owned gardens open to the public, along with gallery.**

WHERE **The Weald of Kent.**

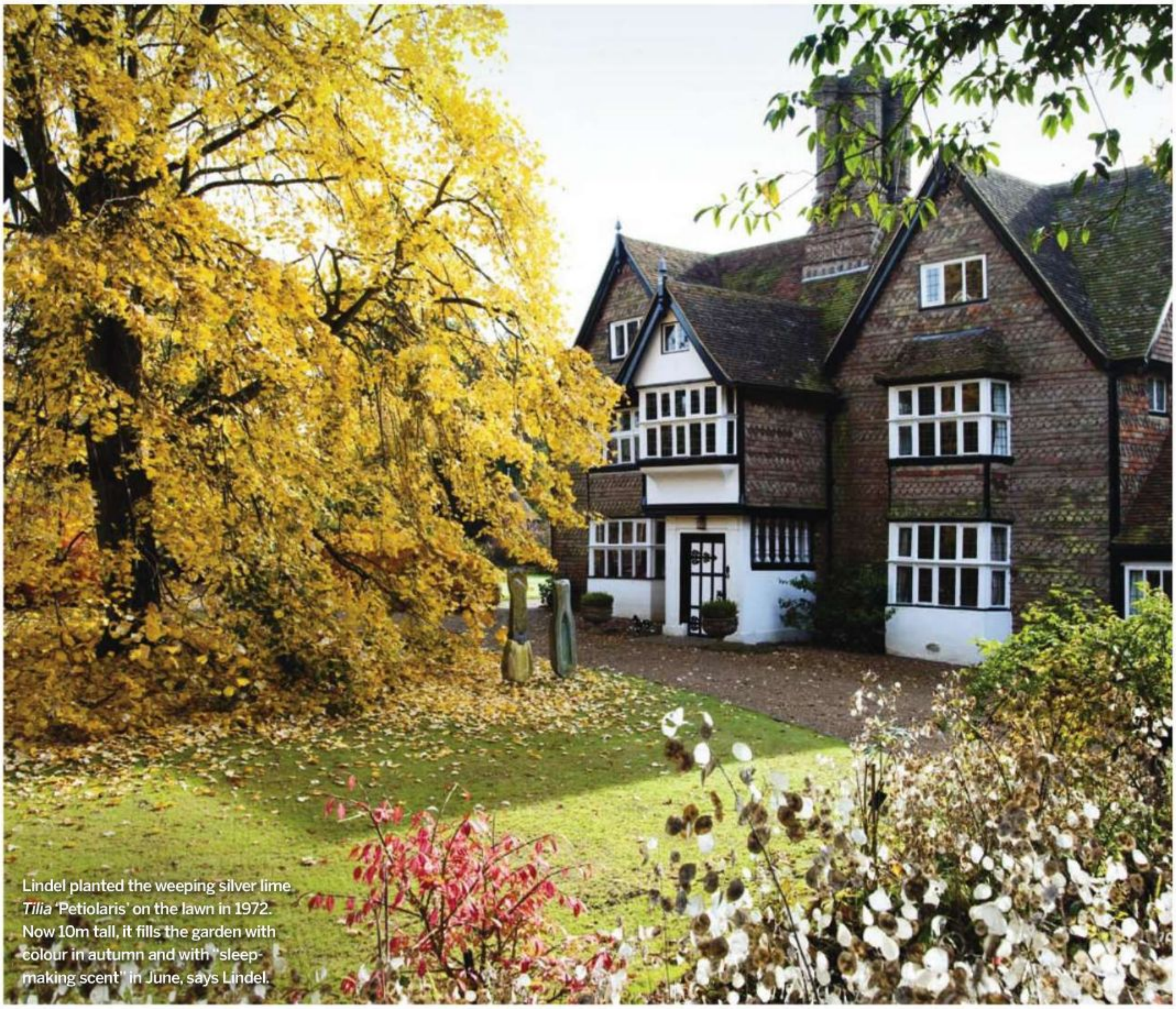
SIZE **10 acres.**

CONDITIONS **Areas of frost pocket and wind.**

SOIL **Mostly clay with some Tunbridge Wells greensand.**

FEATURES **Ponds, herbaceous borders and lots of trees.**

GARDEN PLAN **See page 42.**



Lindel planted the weeping silver lime *Tilia* 'Petiolaris' on the lawn in 1972. Now 10m tall, it fills the garden with colour in autumn and with "sleep-making scent" in June, says Lindel.

There are not many of us who can stand outside their front door, dwarfed by a truly magnificent specimen of weeping silver lime (*Tila* 'Petiolaris', pictured above) and say, almost insouciantly, "We planted that," as Lindel Williams can. She has lived at Marle Place, in the Weald of Kent, for almost all her life, the majority of it with her husband Gerald.

Lindel's father, the novelist Victor Canning, bought the house in 1948. The oldest part of the building dates from the 16th century, and there are Victorian and Edwardian additions. "When we got here the garden was an odd mixture of Victorian stuff and our predecessor's planting. He bought a lot of plants but plonked them about in a seemingly random way, with no thought for design." Parts of it were also overgrown; for example, the sunken garden (now known as the Scented Garden) was invisible. "My sister and I discovered it one day," remembers Lindel. "We were exploring and found this formal pond and a tap that gushed water. That was a very exciting day."

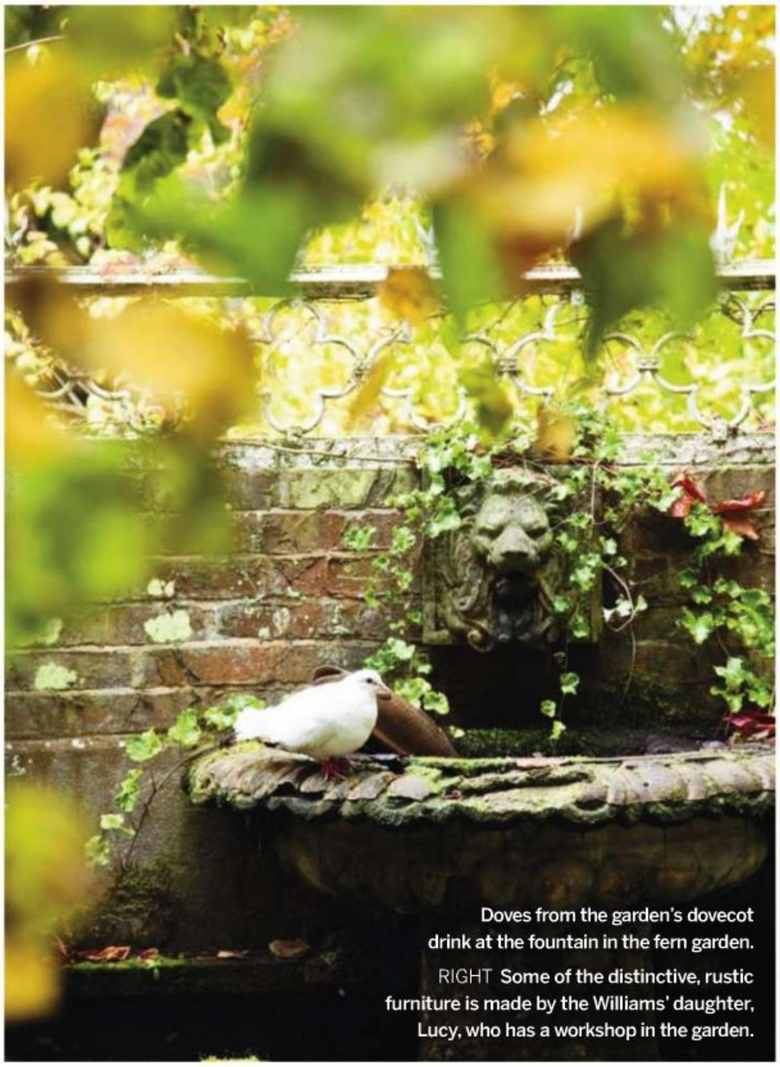
Gradually, her parents began to wrench the garden back on course. Her father spent some time in California and came back determined to build a swimming pool. The technology did not really exist but a deep hole was dug and as a result, says Lindel, "We were very popular in the neighbourhood."

Lindel's mother concentrated more on the plants, a tradition Lindel and Gerald carried on enthusiastically. There are all the things one expects from a garden of this size: borders, shrubberies, abundant vegetable gardens, an Edwardian rockery and hedges cut to razored perfection. There is also a fine Victorian gazebo overlooking a croquet lawn ("when we took over this was an extraordinary rose garden consisting of 50 small beds, which equalled hundreds of yards of edging to cut") and a fine conifer collection (planted by Lindel's mother).

A garden of surprises

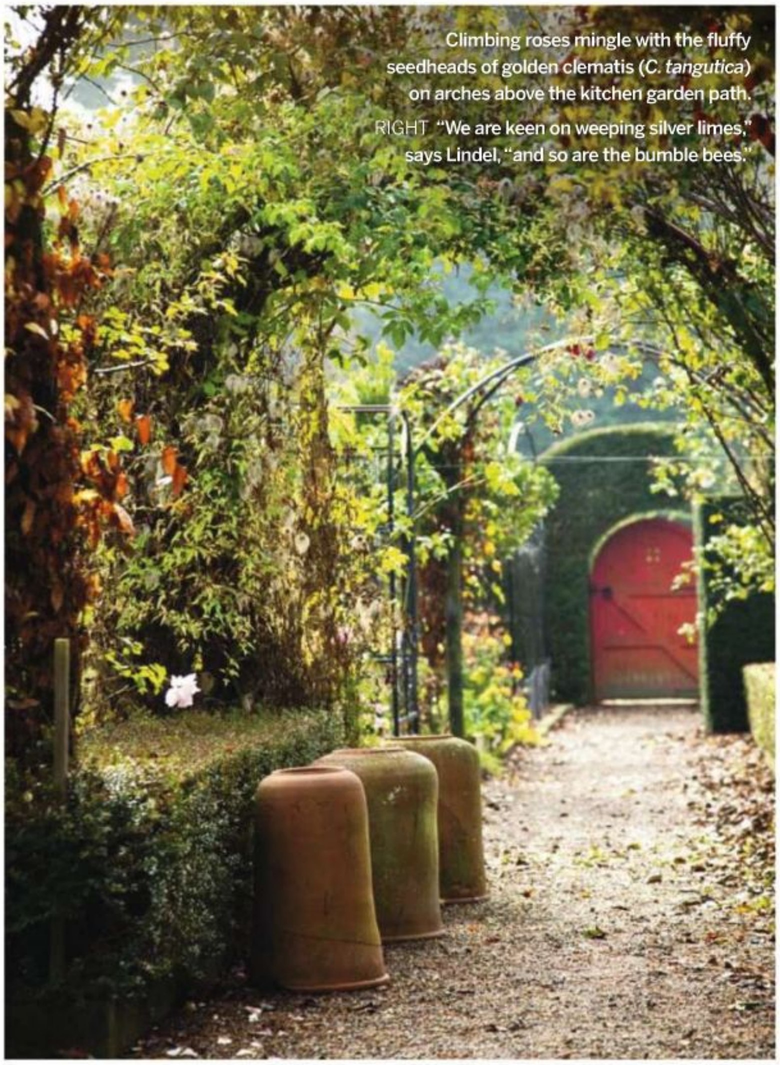
Many other things at Marle Place are more surprising. The garden is dotted with sculptures, ranging from Chinese archers to artfully stacked clay pancakes and a towering cast iron telescope designed to catch the fleeting midsummer solstice. There are steps, paved by Lindel with the broken shards of pottery dug

▷



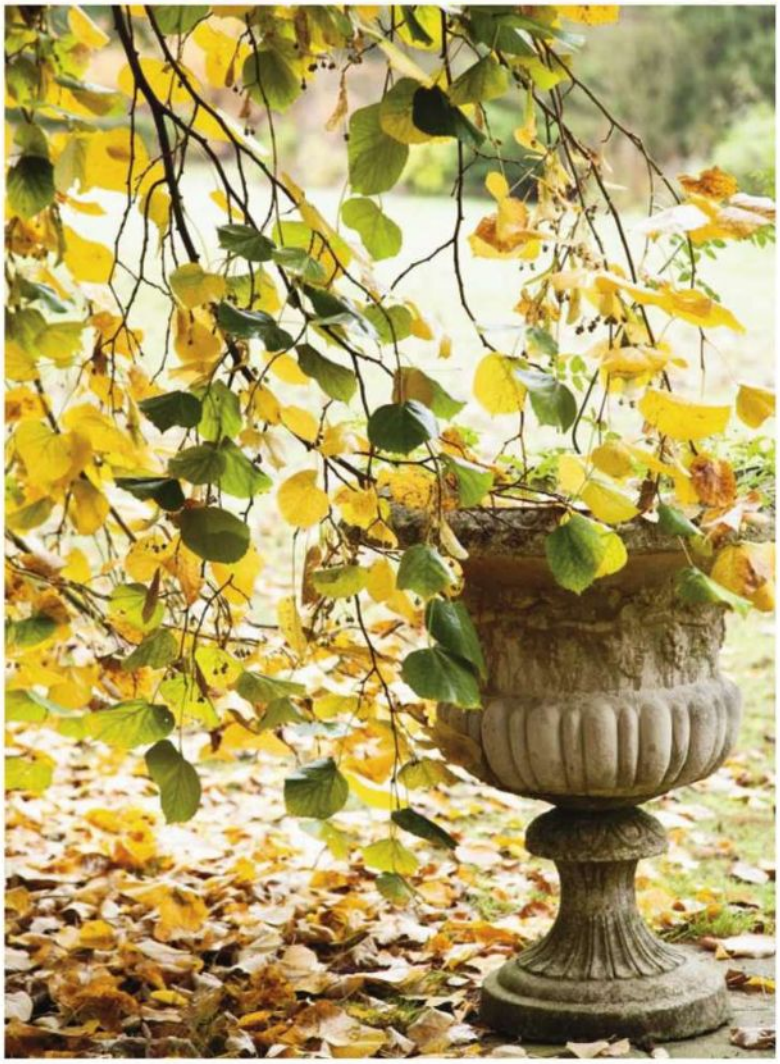
Doves from the garden's dovecot drink at the fountain in the fern garden.

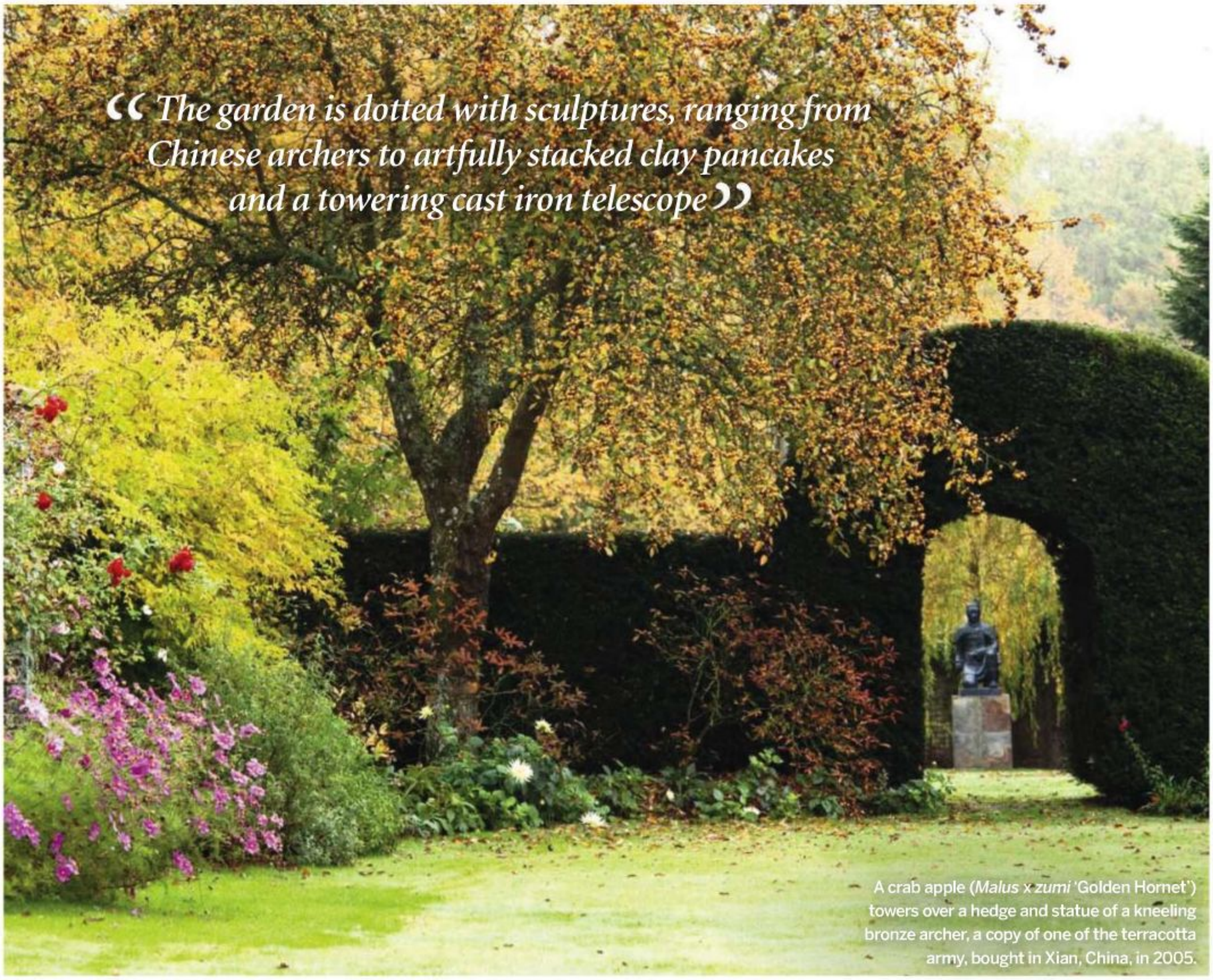
RIGHT Some of the distinctive, rustic furniture is made by the Williams' daughter, Lucy, who has a workshop in the garden.



Climbing roses mingle with the fluffy seedheads of golden clematis (*C. tangutica*) on arches above the kitchen garden path.

RIGHT "We are keen on weeping silver limes," says Lindel, "and so are the bumble bees."





> ““The garden is dotted with sculptures, ranging from Chinese archers to artfully stacked clay pancakes and a towering cast iron telescope””

A crab apple (*Malus x zumi* 'Golden Hornet') towers over a hedge and statue of a kneeling bronze archer, a copy of one of the terracotta army, bought in Xian, China, in 2005.

▷ up from an old rubbish heap. In a spectacular pasture all varieties of *Allium* grow wild among oats and corncockles.

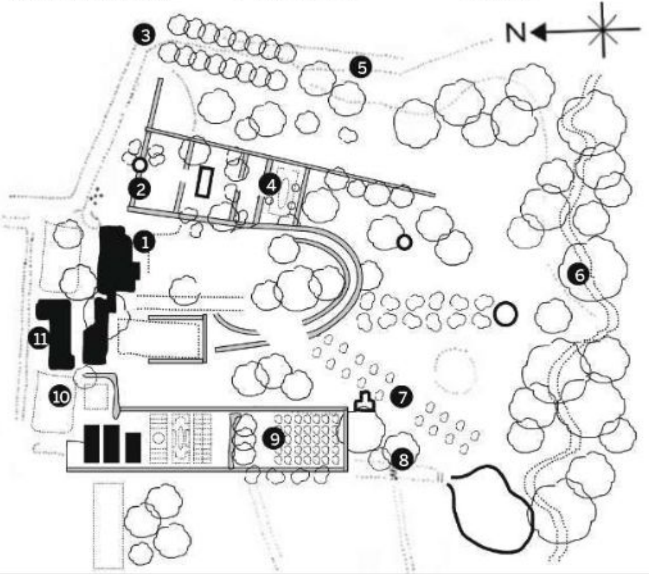
Dominating one end of the garden is an avenue of Leyland cypress. You can almost hear the sudden in-taking of breath, but Lindel is defiant. “I love *leylandii*,” she announces with pride (and with a slightly challenging set to her jaw). “They smell amazing and have a fascinating association with fungus: we have picked four different sorts of mushroom from beneath these trees.” Lindel feels strongly about fungi and, she is right, a full-grown Leyland in the right place is a pretty magnificent thing.

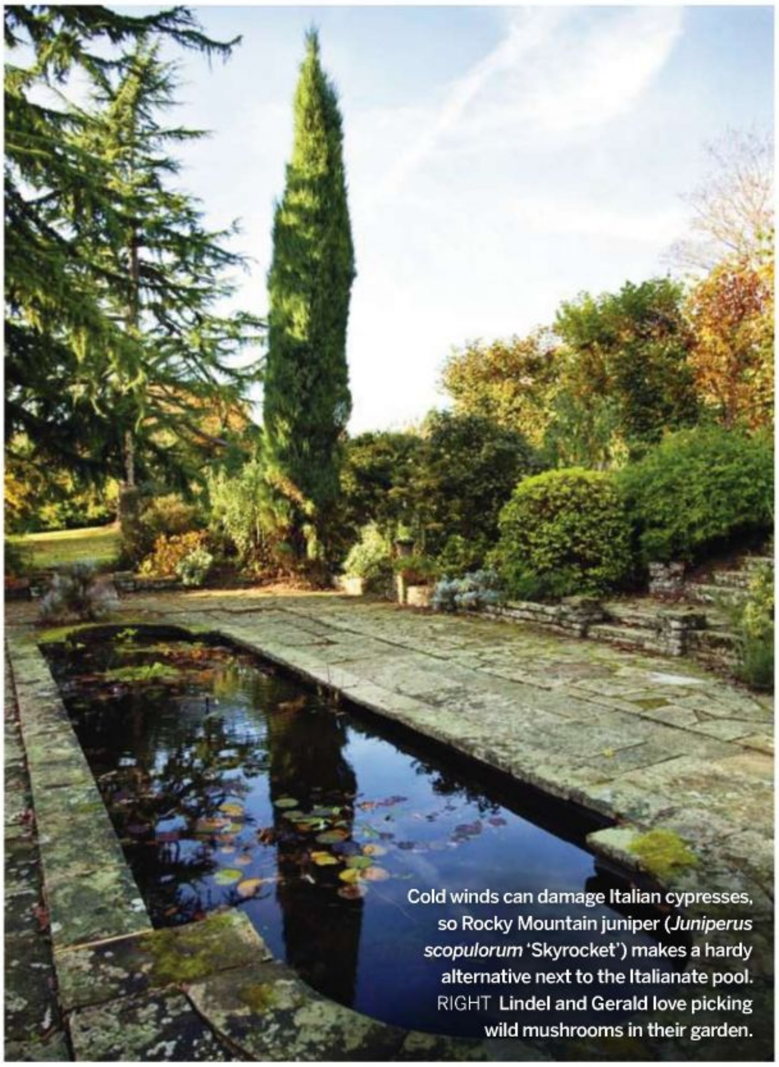
Thousands of trees

This is a garden full of trees, almost all of them planted by the Williamses; Gerald is the chairman of the Friends of Bedgebury Pinetum. The main survivor from a previous age is a towering cedar that weathered the 1987 storm. The gales of that night – the worst since 1703 – wiped out an estimated 15 million trees in southeastern England. They destroyed a lot of the original Victorian garden at Marle Place, but this, on balance, was a good thing, says Lindel. For a start, Gerald has planted 7,000 hardwoods (“enough to build a whole navy in about a hundred years' time”) in what was an old Hop Garden. Then there are ▷

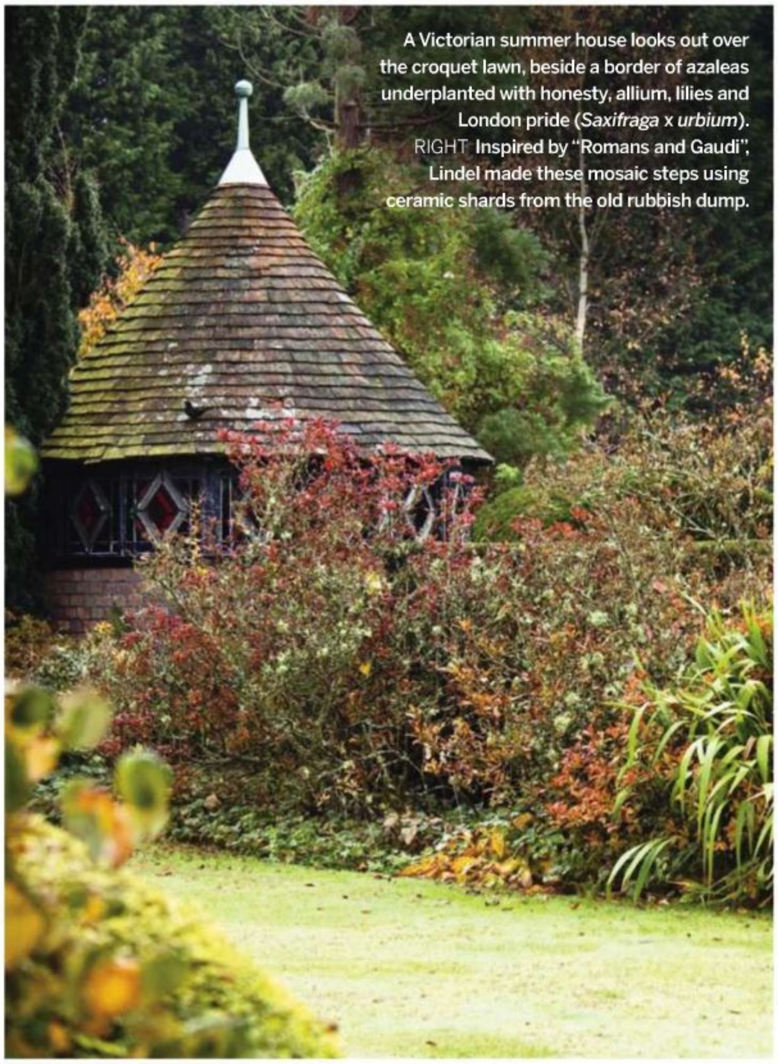
Garden plan

1 House
2 Gazebo & croquet lawn
3 Archer sculpture
4 Scented garden
5 Woodland walk
6 Stream
7 Lime avenue
8 Bog garden
9 Vegetable garden
10 Rockery
11 Gallery

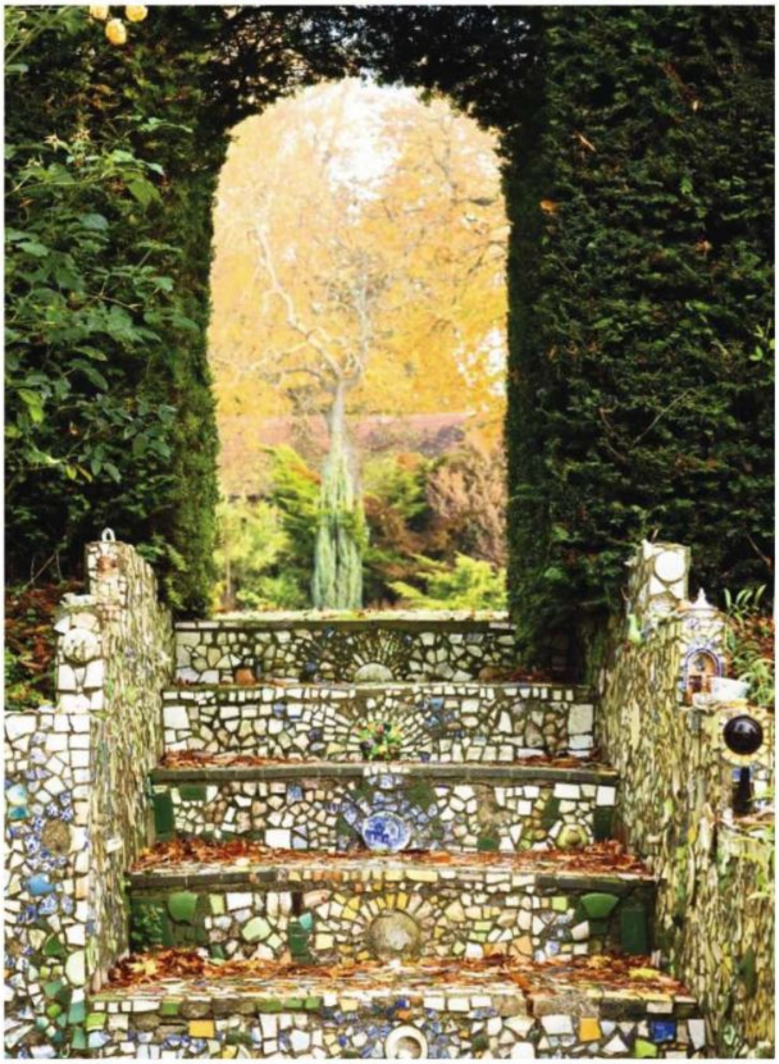


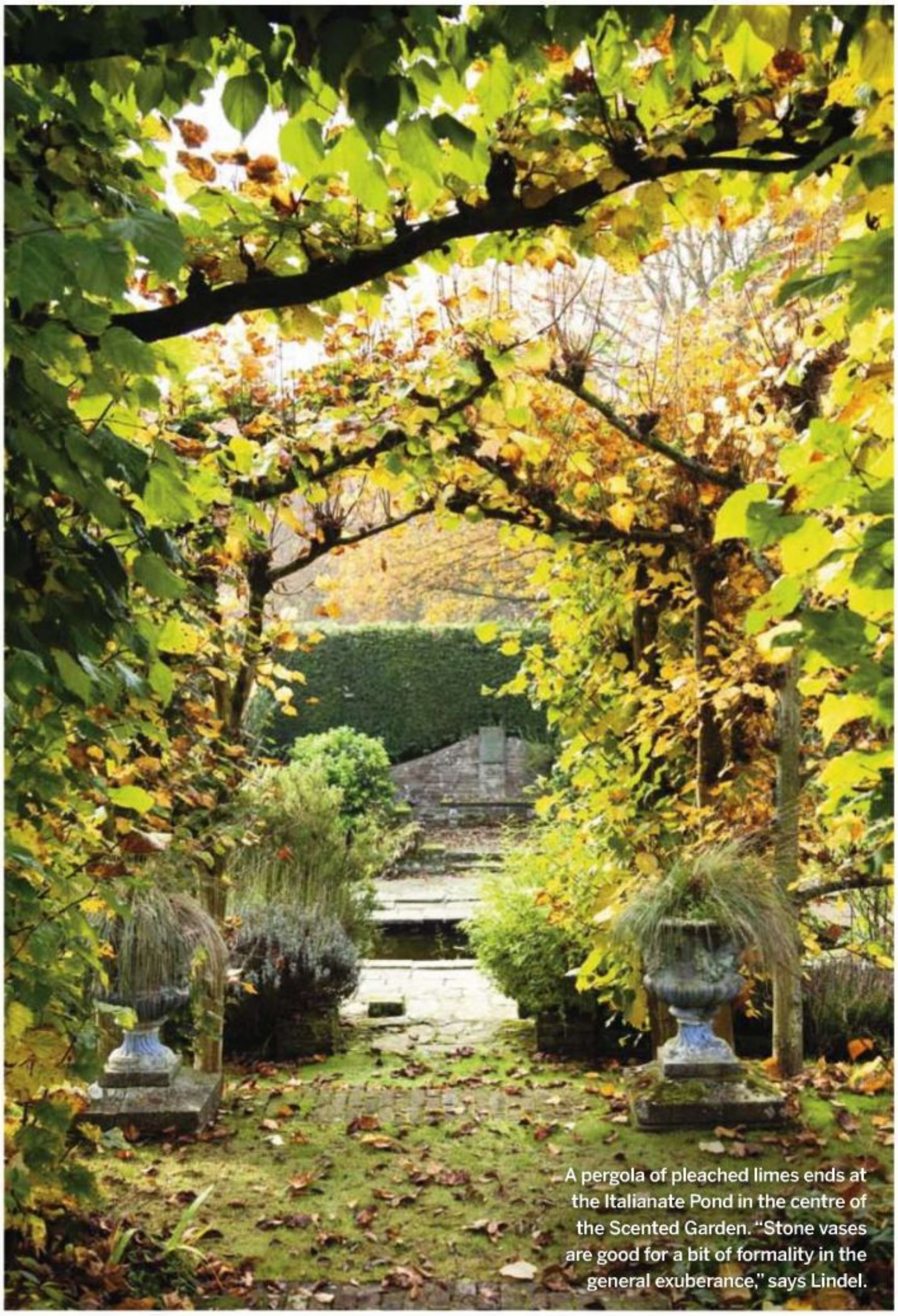


Cold winds can damage Italian cypresses, so Rocky Mountain juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum* 'Skyrocket') makes a hardy alternative next to the Italianate pool. RIGHT Lindel and Gerald love picking wild mushrooms in their garden.



A Victorian summer house looks out over the croquet lawn, beside a border of azaleas underplanted with honesty, allium, lilies and London pride (*Saxifraga x urbium*). RIGHT Inspired by "Romans and Gaudi", Lindel made these mosaic steps using ceramic shards from the old rubbish dump.





A pergola of pleached limes ends at the Italianate Pond in the centre of the Scented Garden. "Stone vases are good for a bit of formality in the general exuberance," says Lindel.

Autumn leaves at Marle Place

Owner Lindel Williams chooses nine favourite plants for seasonal foliage

1 *Ginkgo biloba* 'Horizontalis'
This rare form has a parasol-shaped canopy of yellow leaves that look wonderful against dark green hedges.

2 *Acer palmatum* var. *dissectum* Dissectum Atropurpureum Group
This small Japanese maple has one of the very best autumn colours.

3 *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*
The dawn redwood is a big, deciduous tree with delicate leaves turning reddish ginger in autumn.

4 *Acer palmatum* var. *dissectum*
A small tree that forms a haystack of golden leaf in autumn – a brilliant transformation after summer's green.

5 *Tilia* 'Petiolaris'
The weeping silver lime turns a fine yellow in autumn.

6 *Cotinus coggygria* Purpureus Group
Well-named as the smoke tree for its fluffy seed heads, which contrast perfectly with strong round leaves.

7 *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Zebrinus'
The cream-speckled leaves of this grass turn from green to yellow in autumn.

8 *Acer griseum*
The paperbark maple is a small, slow-growing tree with scarlet autumn leaves and cinnamon-coloured bark.

9 *Vitis* 'Brant'
This grapevine has bright autumn leaves that fall to reveal pink stalks.

▷ two avenues; one of limes and one of silver birch (Gerald "rescued them from the bulldozers building the Pembury bypass"), which ends in a tall gazebo constructed from salvaged cast iron pillars. The place also drips with fine maples, ranging from a pair of *Acer palmatum* var. *dissectum* by the front gates to a great cloud of *Acer pseudoplatanus* 'Brilliantissimum' on the main lawn and the horned maple *Acer diabolicum*: all of them at their very best at this time of year.

A gardener's work is never done

As with all good gardeners, Lindel and Gerald never stop planting and the latest addition is an arboretum planted for autumn colour. Though young, it is possible to pick out some unusual oaks including *Quercus dentata* (the Daimio oak), *Q. dentata* 'Pinnatifida' and the lovely *Q. phellos* (or willow oak). The field is dotted with patches of wildflowers and backed by a flourishing bamboo garden. The garden brims over with variety and there is something here to satisfy every garden visitor – did I mention the orchid house and the bog garden?

Lindel and Gerald say they enjoy having visitors wandering around. "It is quite like being on stage: we do it to share what we have and also, to be perfectly honest, because we enjoy the applause." Hurrah, Bravo and Encore to them, and to Marle Place. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

ADDRESS Marle Place Gardens, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 7HS.
TEL 01892 722304, WEBSITE www.marleplace.co.uk
OPEN By appointment during winter; then daily, 1 April 1 to 2 October 2011, 10am-5pm.

James Alexander-Sinclair is a garden designer who appears regularly on BBC gardening programmes, including coverage of the Chelsea Flower Show.

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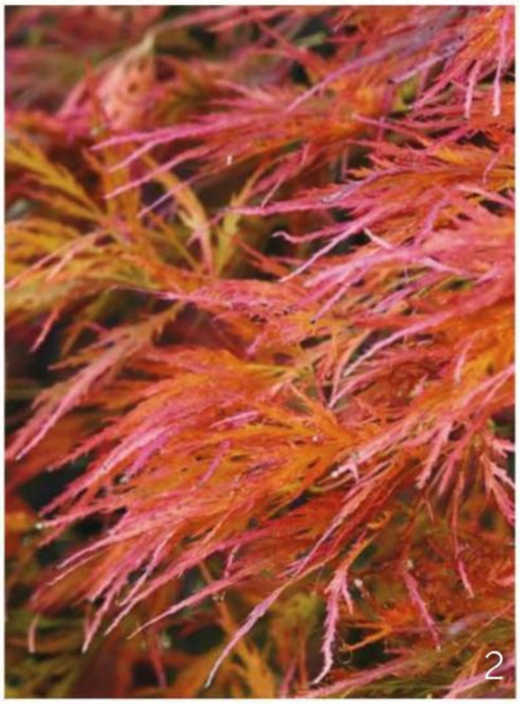
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2: ROB WHITWORTH / GAP PHOTOS

The thick skin of pumpkins and winter squashes not only looks beautiful but helps preserve the delicious flesh for months.

Scrumptious pumpkins

The season's most spectacular crop is easy to grow yourself, according to Maren Korsgaard, who cultivates dozens of different squash on her hillside plot

WORDS ANNEMARIE JAKOBSEN & INGER SKAARUP PHOTOGRAPHS HEIDI LERKENFELDT RECIPES ULLA SCHULTZ

Children often ask grower Maren Korsgaard if the crops she grows are "real". No wonder, when they come in such strange colours and otherworldly shapes. Yet Maren's harvest of pumpkins and winter squashes is both real and a convincing display of nature's variety in autumn.

Maren says she first became fascinated with pumpkins and winter squashes in the late 1970s while studying in the USA, where they have been a food staple for generations. More than 20 years would pass before she was able to grow some herself. "In 2002 I finally had the time and some land of my own," says Maren. "The children had reached an age where they could join me in the field and it seemed like a fun family project to try."

Soon the family was tending 600 healthy seedlings of eight to ten different cultivars, including *Curcurbita maxima* 'Uchiki Kuri' and *C. moschata* 'Butternut' as well as the large and impressive types such as *C. pepo* 'Muscat de Provence' and small ones such as *C. pepo* 'Sweet Dumpling'. On a sunny, south-facing slope between young fruit trees, the plants took off and the harvest was as prolific and varied as expected.

But the end of the growing season brought an unexpected blow. It turned out that pumpkins and winter squash were a hard sell. Customers were unfamiliar with them and uncertain how to prepare and eat them. Maren managed to sell some to an organic co-operative; others she sold herself at street markets.

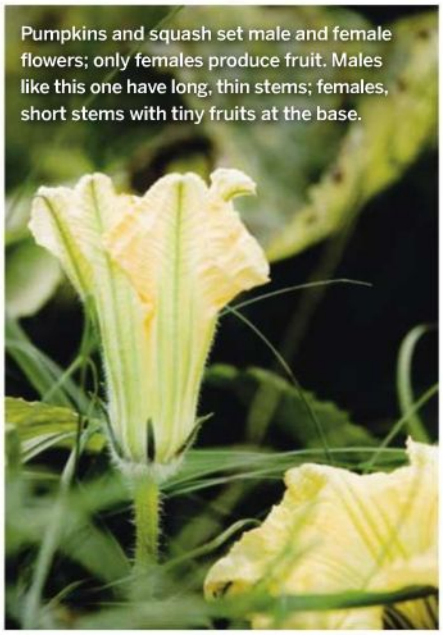
Undeterred by this poor first season, Maren forged ahead, growing the crop again the following season and every season since as sales gradually picked up.

An early summer start

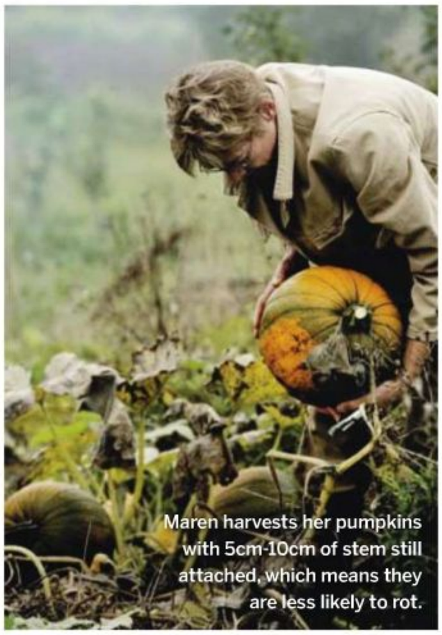
Maren starts seeds in pots at the beginning of May, setting them out in a protected spot. She says she is always careful to cover them to provide a little extra warmth and protect them from birds and snails.

Maren then plants out her pumpkins and squashes in the field at the end of May. She rotates the crop only every other year, and says she has had no major problems with powdery mildew. Generally, she says, growing them is easy and maintenance through the growing season light – just a little watering, fertilising and weeding, and ▷

Maren's crop includes large winter squash such as 'Blue Hubbard', which can reach a weight of up to 9kg. To grow big, healthy fruit in your garden, pinch out the vines to allow just two or three fruits to develop on each.



Pumpkins and squash set male and female flowers; only females produce fruit. Males like this one have long, thin stems; females, short stems with tiny fruits at the base.



Maren harvests her pumpkins with 5cm-10cm of stem still attached, which means they are less likely to rot.

▷ a lot of standing back to take in the miracle (see *Sowing, growing & harvesting pumpkins*, below). It is, she says, one of the most life-affirming plants to grow, with vines that seem to double in length in the blink of an eye. After the autumn harvest, she walks away from the dried leaves and stems, simply leaving everything in place to decompose.

Since her first year of growing pumpkins and winter squash, Maren has gradually cut back on the scale of production, setting out only about 300 plants from 30 different cultivars. Each year, she tries something new and spectacular just for fun, but otherwise she sticks to the most popular cultivars. She has added more cultivars that produce smaller fruits, as the 'single serving' types are most popular with customers.

Growing wisdom

Of course, Maren has the luxury of a large plot devoted to pumpkin-growing. What about those gardeners with less room? "If ever I had to limit myself to growing only for my own use," says Maren, "the best are 'Uchiki Kuri', 'Blue Banana', 'Rouge Vif d'Étampes' and 'Sweet Dumpling'" [all pictured opposite]. She adds 'Butternut' and recently introduced cultivars *C.* 'Sonca' and *C.* 'Angélique' because of their pleasant flavour. However, she says, the differences in taste really does come down to only subtle nuances, with slight variations in the sugar content and the firmness of the flesh.

Will Maren still be growing pumpkins and squash in ten years? "Certainly," she says, "because it continues to amaze me how something so beautiful and bountiful can emerge from a single little seed." Her appetite for pumpkin-growing is like that of flower-lovers – once hooked, they too will continue, season after season. What pumpkins and squash have on flowers, though, is that they provide decoration for months on end – and then you can eat them. □

• Turn the page for tasty pumpkin recipes. ▷

Sowing, growing & harvesting pumpkins

- **Choose for size.** Some cultivars of winter squash, such as 'Mesa Queen', need only about one square metre. Cultivars with long vines, including 'Turk's Turban', require three or four times as much space.
- **Plant in full sun** in ordinary garden soil.
- **Sow seeds directly in the garden** around the middle of May. Protect plants from snails and birds. To get a head start, plant seeds in pots in the first half of May. Keep them in a greenhouse or on a windowsill for three weeks and then transplant to the garden.
- **Fertilise** by spreading a generous layer of rich compost around the root zone.
- **Water as seeds/plants go in the ground**. Keep soil moist until well established. Water during dry spells, especially while plants are flowering and setting fruit.
- **Weed regularly** until plants are well established.
- **Harvest when stems become stripy**. At this stage, the skin of winter squash will be hard, while pumpkins may still give a little if pressed with a finger. Be sure to harvest before frost, which will cause fruit to rot. Cut from the vine, keeping the stem and, if possible, leaving a 5cm-10cm piece of vine attached to the fruit.
- **Cure by placing fruit in a sunny place** for seven to ten days. This process further hardens the skin and generally extends the storage life.
- **Store in a light, dry and cool spot**.
- See last month's *Grow it yourself* with Alys Fowler for more tips on growing pumpkins and winter squashes.

9 perfect pumpkins for your garden

Some pumpkins and winter squash have particularly delicious flesh while others have ornamental skins. Here are some of Maren Korsgaard's favourites

1. *Curcubita maxima* 'Galeux d'Eysines'
Winter squash with an oddly textured skin and firm, orange flesh. Best roasted or puréed for use in pies, cakes and soups. 3kg-14kg. Stores for four to six months.

2. *C. pepo* 'Sweet dumpling'
Small cream-coloured winter squash with green stripes. The flesh is bright orange, sweet and firm. Use raw in salads and coleslaw, or stuff, roast and serve whole. 300-600g. Stores for three to six months.

3. *C. maxima* 'Uchiki Kuri'
This is one of the most versatile winter squashes. Eat raw, steamed, roasted, puréed or stuffed. It's delicious too, with dry and slightly nutty-tasting flesh. 1kg-2.5kg. Stores for five to six months.

4. *C. moschata* 'Greenwich'
Pretty blackish-green winter squash with lighter green splotches and stripes. The flesh is orange, dry and firm. Use raw and in soups or purée for use in baking. 1kg-2kg. Stores for five to eight months.

5. *C. pepo* 'Mandarin'
A pretty, nicely shaped winter squash. Although best for ornamental use, it is edible and may be served stuffed with herbs and baked whole or hollowed out and used as a decorative serving container. 300g-500g. Stores for four to five months.

6. *C. maxima* 'Rouge Vif d'Étampes'
Brilliantly coloured pumpkin with delicious and juicy flesh. Suitable for soups, roasting and in chutney and pickling. 3kg-15kg. Stores for five to eight months.

7. *C. maxima* 'Turk's Turban'
Uniquely shaped winter squash with firm, dry and aromatic flesh. It's a versatile crop that may be roasted, stuffed and puréed for use in soups. 1kg-5kg. Stores for 12 months or longer in ideal conditions.

8. *C. maxima* 'Blue Banana'
A decorative winter squash whose firm, dry, yellow to orange flesh has a good flavour. This versatile squash can be eaten raw, steamed, roasted or puréed. 1.5kg-4kg. Stores for up to ten months.

9. *C. maxima* 'Hungarian Blue'
Winter squash with dark orange, soft, mild flesh. Use for soups and in baked goods. 4kg-9kg. Stores for four to seven months.

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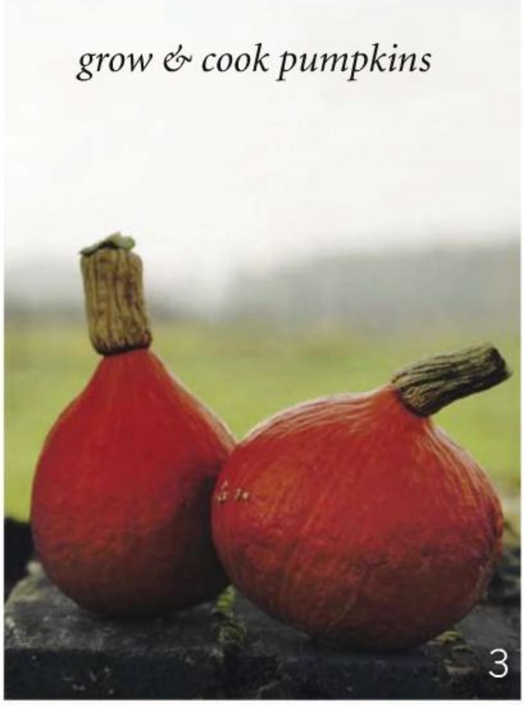

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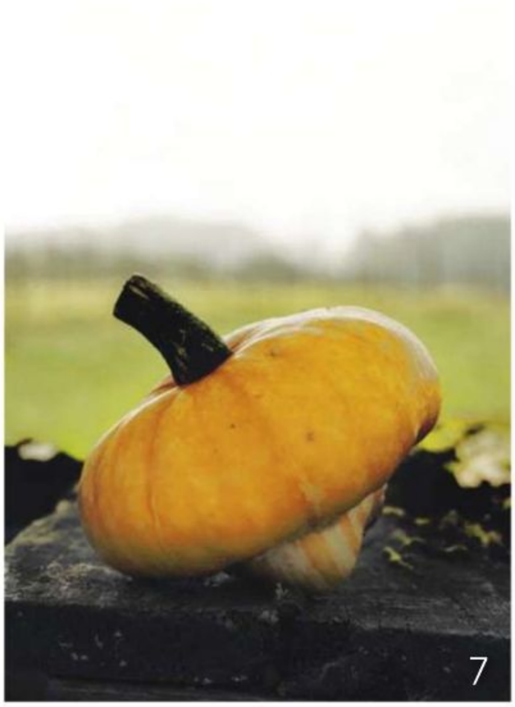

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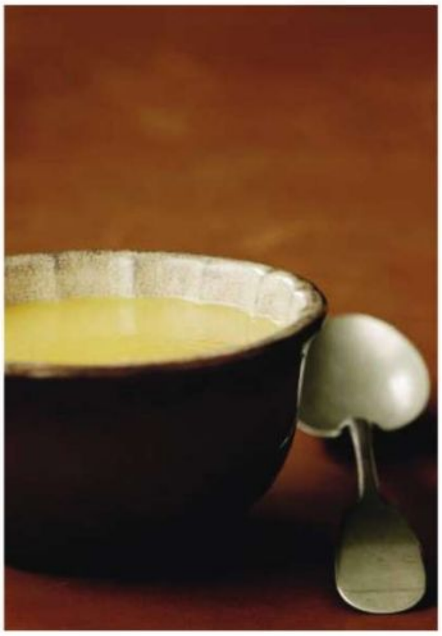


Pumpkin & squash recipes

The mellow, earthy flavour of these autumn fruits suits both sweet and savoury dishes

Autumn soup with pumpkin

Mix and match any and all of the season's vegetables to make endless variations of this hearty soup.

For 4-5 servings:

1 onion
1 leek
½ turnip
1 parsnip
1 carrot
1 small winter squash, for instance 'Hokkaido'
3 cloves garlic
25g butter
500ml vegetable stock
salt and pepper
finely chopped parsley

Clean the vegetables and chop into similarly sized pieces, about 2cm x 2cm. Melt the butter in a large soup pot and sauté the vegetables until they just begin to brown. Add the stock and simmer until the vegetables are tender but not too soft. Transfer to a food processor and blend until puréed, working in two or more batches, if necessary. Return to the pan, adjust seasoning and reheat just before serving.

Pumpkin rolls

Serve warm with soup or salad, or use for sandwiches.

For about 14 rolls:

200ml pumpkin purée (see below)
700ml lukewarm water
30g yeast
15g salt (about three level teaspoons)
100ml vegetable oil
750g wheat flour
300g durum flour
200g rye flour

For the purée (makes 600g): Cut 1kg of pumpkin into 2cm-thick slices. Cut slices in half and remove seeds. Place on a baking sheet covered with baking paper and bake at 180°C for 30 minutes. Remove the pumpkin flesh from the shell while still warm and purée in a blender. If needed within a few days, purée may be stored in clean jars. Otherwise store in the freezer in smaller portions for use in bread, cakes, soups or as baby food high in vitamin A.

To make the rolls Mix purée and water. Crumble over yeast and stir to dissolve, then add salt and oil. Add two thirds of the flour and mix with a spoon or hands until well combined. Add remaining flour as needed, until the dough just releases fingers when kneaded. Cover with a clean cloth, place in a warm spot and allow the dough to rise until double in size, about two hours. Divide into 14 pieces and shape into rolls, dipping hands in flour as needed. Place rolls on a baking sheet lightly greased with oil or covered with a piece of baking paper. Bake at 180°C or until the rolls are golden and done.

Pumpkin & almond cake

Grated pumpkin gives this cake a delicious consistency. The recipe suggests baking the cake in a rectangular loaf pan, but small cakes baked in individual small tins (such as the jelly mould above) will look really tempting.

For 4-5 servings:

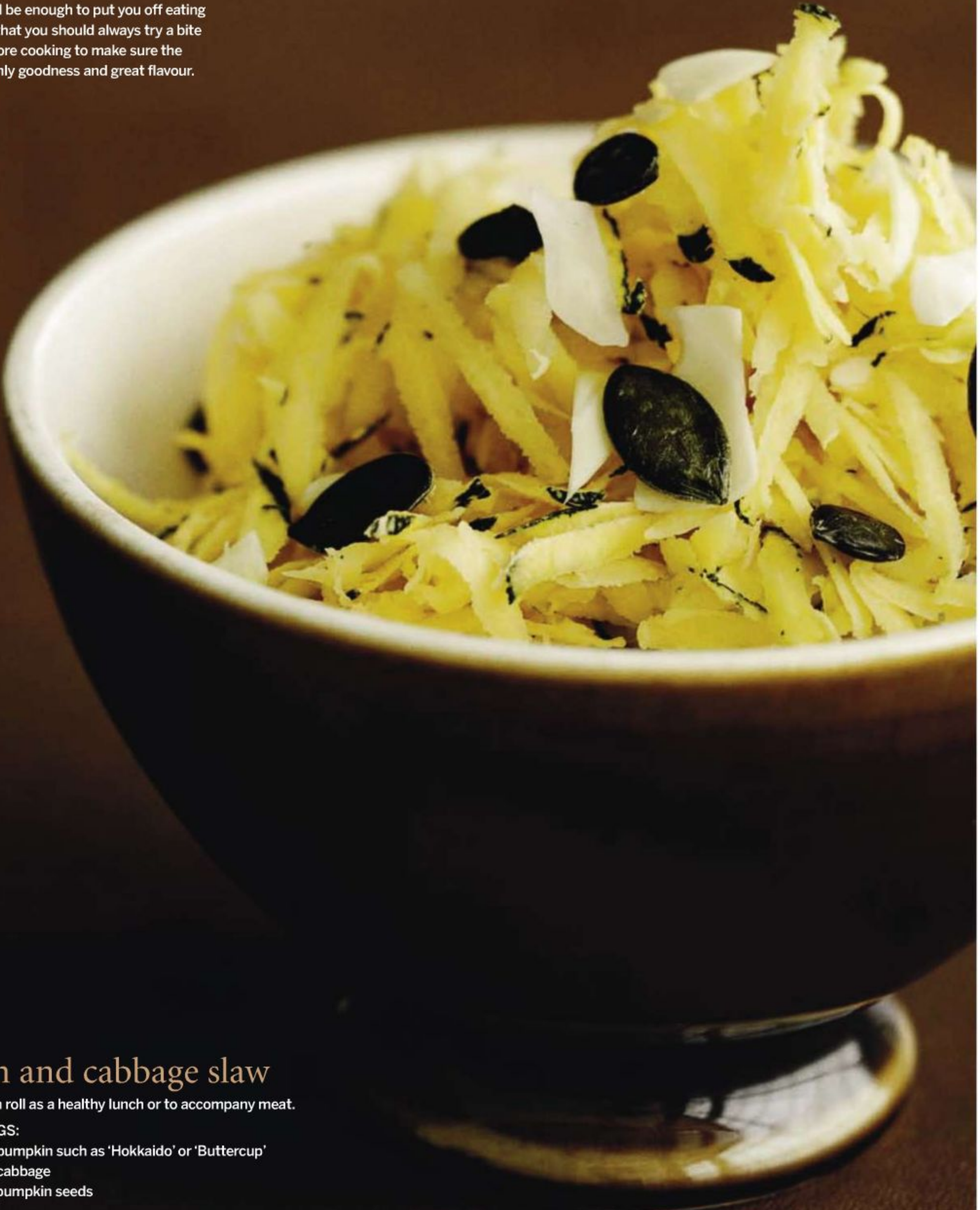
150g sugar
seed of half a vanilla pod
100g grated day-old white bread
75g finely grated almonds
100g grated pumpkin
½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
1½ tsp baking powder
grated zest of half an organic lemon
grated zest of one organic orange
125ml neutral oil, for instance grape seed oil
four large eggs

Syrup:

juice of half an organic lemon
juice of one organic orange
50g sugar
cinnamon stick (about 5cm long)
seed of half a vanilla pod
50ml water

Mix together sugar and the seed of half a vanilla bean. Add the bread, almonds, pumpkin, bicarbonate of soda and baking powder and mix well to combine. Add lemon- and orange zest, oil and egg and beat until the mixture is even. Pour into a loaf tin lined with baking paper and bake at 180°C for 45 minutes (reduce baking time if dividing into smaller tins). Transfer cake to a rack and allow to cool. Meanwhile, combine all ingredients for the syrup in a pot. Bring to a boil and simmer mixture for 10 minutes. Remove from heat and remove cinnamon stick. Using a skewer, poke holes on the top of the cake and pour over the syrup. Leave for a few hours or overnight to allow flavours to blend before serving.

NOTE: Pumpkins and winter squashes are part of the *Cucurbitaceae* family, which also includes melons and cucumbers. All members of this family are able to create a toxin called cucurbitacin, which may occur in concentrated amounts in some crops. This is potentially harmful, but has such an unpleasant, bitter flavour that one taste of a toxin-loaded pumpkin will be enough to put you off eating it. Maren suggests that you should always try a bite of the raw flesh before cooking to make sure the pumpkin is full of only goodness and great flavour.



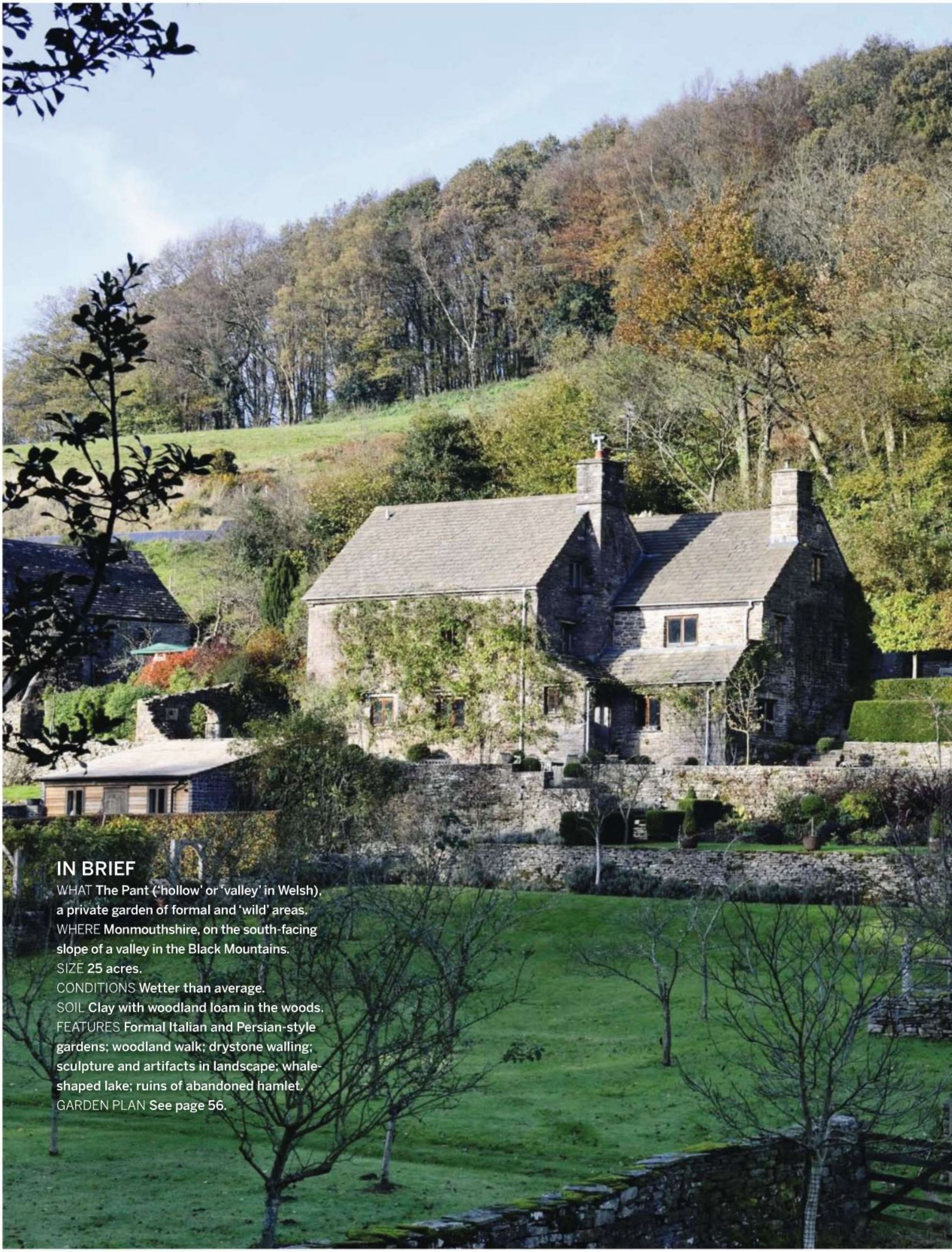
Pumpkin and cabbage slaw

Serve with pumpkin roll as a healthy lunch or to accompany meat.

FOR FOUR SERVINGS:
200g finely grated pumpkin such as 'Hokkaido' or 'Buttercup'
200g finely grated cabbage
50g toasted green pumpkin seeds

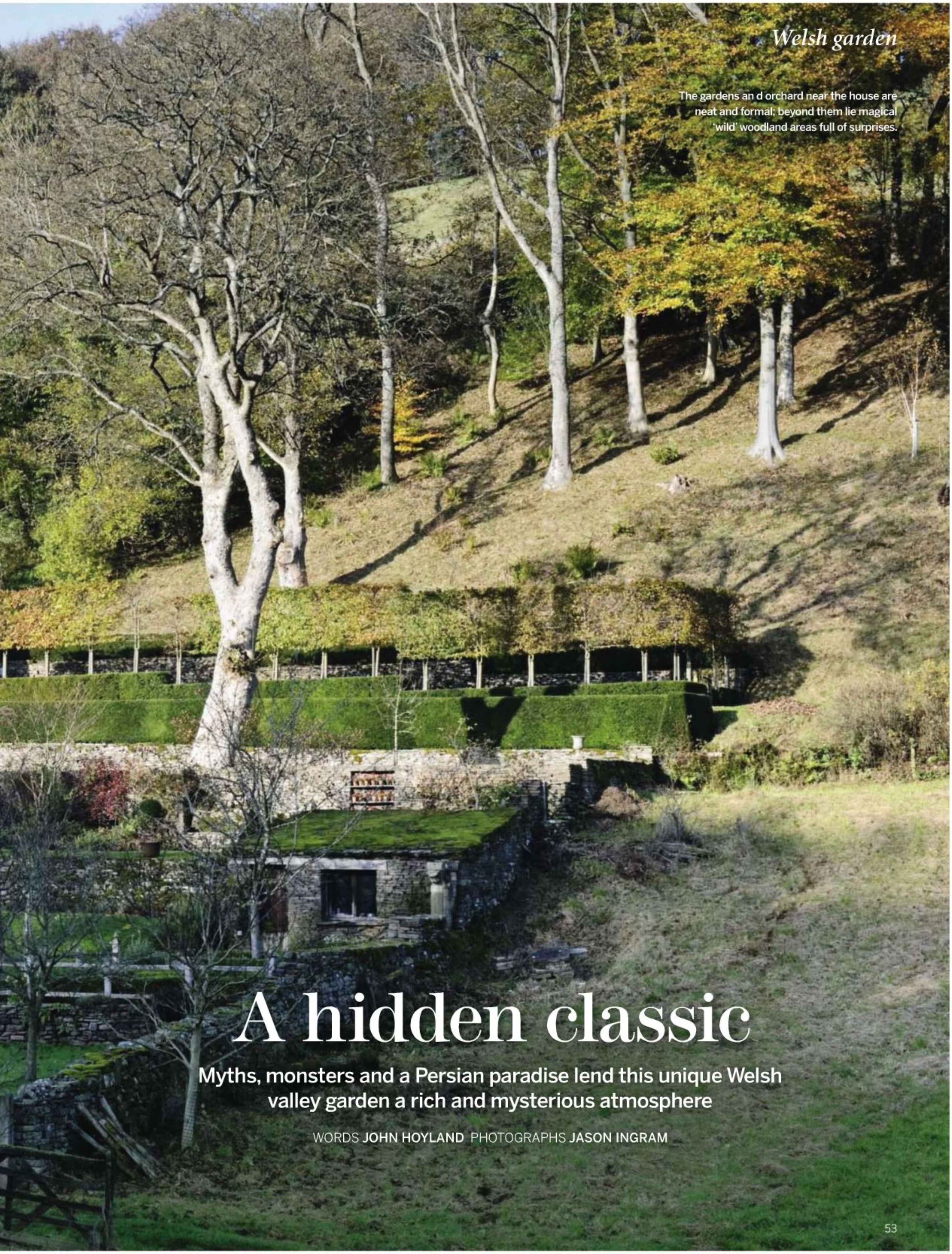
DRESSING:
4 tbsp neutral oil such as grape seed oil
2 tbsp cider vinegar
salt

Place grated vegetables and pumpkin seeds in a bowl. Combine dressing, pour over and stir to combine.



IN BRIEF

WHAT **The Pant ('hollow' or 'valley' in Welsh), a private garden of formal and 'wild' areas.**
WHERE **Monmouthshire, on the south-facing slope of a valley in the Black Mountains.**
SIZE **25 acres.**
CONDITIONS **Wetter than average.**
SOIL **Clay with woodland loam in the woods.**
FEATURES **Formal Italian and Persian-style gardens; woodland walk; drystone walling; sculpture and artifacts in landscape; whale-shaped lake; ruins of abandoned hamlet.**
GARDEN PLAN **See page 56.**

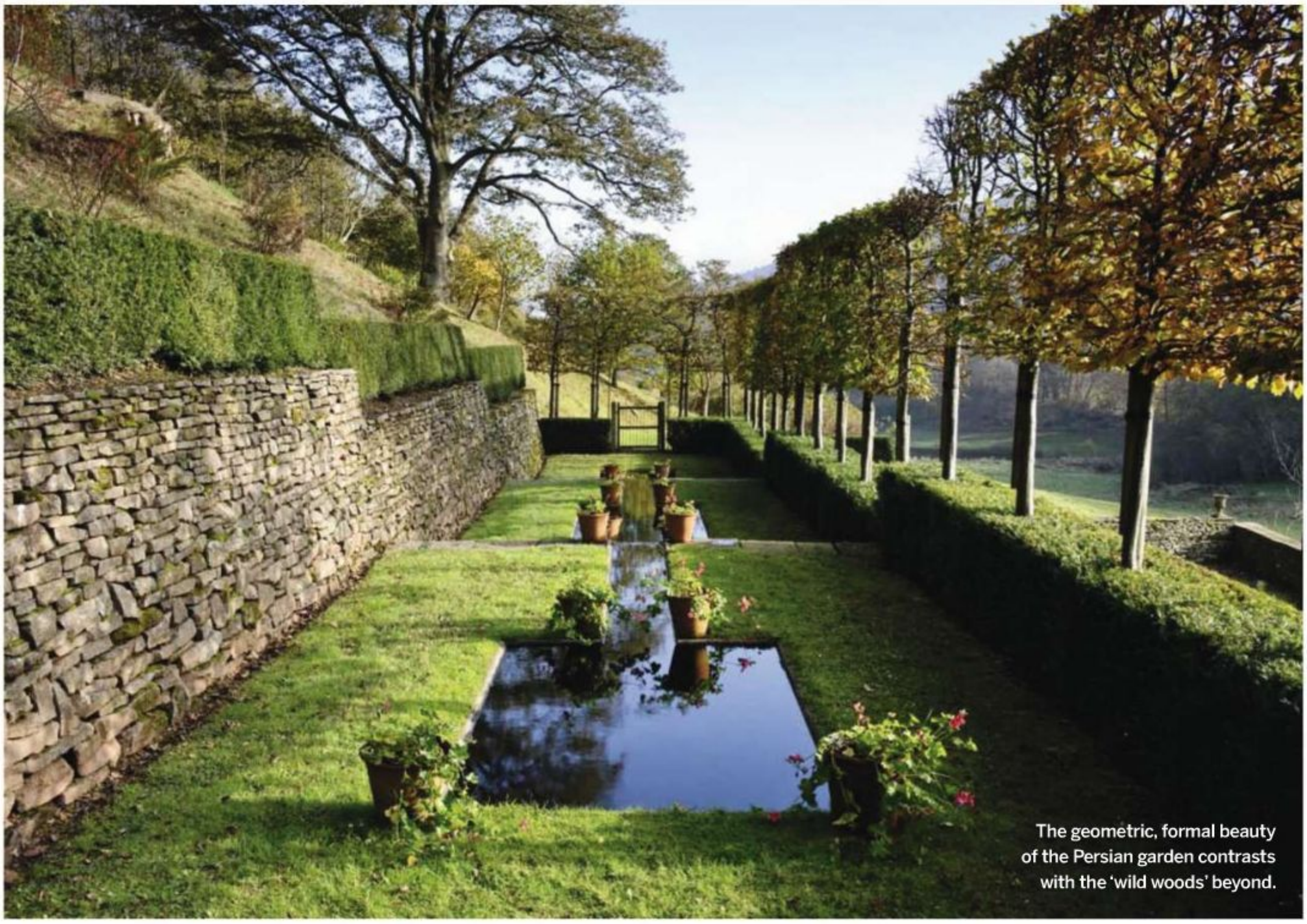


The gardens and orchard near the house are neat and formal; beyond them lie magical 'wild' woodland areas full of surprises.

A hidden classic

Myths, monsters and a Persian paradise lend this unique Welsh valley garden a rich and mysterious atmosphere

WORDS **JOHN HOYLAND** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**



The geometric, formal beauty of the Persian garden contrasts with the 'wild woods' beyond.

The man sitting next to me on the train is adamant: there are no gardens worth seeing around here. We are on the branch line out of Newport heading towards Abergavenny. "I'm a gardener and I know these hills. To see anything interesting you need to carry on out of here, across the border." But I know otherwise; that these hills, the Black Mountains, hide a treasure of a garden that cannot be found on any open-gardens list nor any garden-tour itinerary.

My journey had begun a few weeks earlier, with a glimpse of a few photographs taken by designer Cleve West. A small amphitheatre with low beech hedges overlooking dramatic hills; a view of a woodland seen through a giant picture frame. The images stayed in my mind, compelling and intriguing. Cleve thought the garden one of the most fascinating he had seen. As I step off the train I know I am in for a treat.

My hosts are anthropologist Jeremy Swift and editor Camilla Swift. After a life working with nomadic pastoralists around the world, Jeremy settled in the Black Mountains, with no original intention of making a garden there. But as Camilla is a former gardening editor of *Saga Magazine*, and now a trustee of the National Botanic Garden of Wales, making a garden was inevitable.

The garden is a reflection of their professional lives. On the steep slopes, a series of terraces evokes the Italian gardens with which both are familiar. Close by, inspired by his time spent in Iran, Jeremy has created a space that conjures the essence of Persian gardens. Hornbeam and yew enclose a reflecting pool with a few simple pots of pelargoniums. It is sparse, moving and stunningly beautiful.

From the vantage point by the Persian garden you look down on a box parterre and formal orchard, all enclosed by clipped hedges. The couple wanted the garden by the house to be distinct from the wild area beyond. Jeremy explained that, as is the culture in many of the tribes he has studied, he wanted no merging of domestic and wild.

Enter the 'wild woods'

Beyond the formal gardens Jeremy and Camilla planted thousands of saplings that have now grown into the surrounding woodland and scrub, creating what they refer to as the "wild woods". A path weaves up the hill through the trees and offers intrigue at

▷

Owner's inspiration

Among the great gardens to influence owner Jeremy Swift are the ancient 'paradise garden' of **Bagh-e Fin** in Iran [GARDENS ILLUSTRATED issue 157], the water gardens of **Château de Courances**, near Paris, [issue 120], and the two Italian gardens:

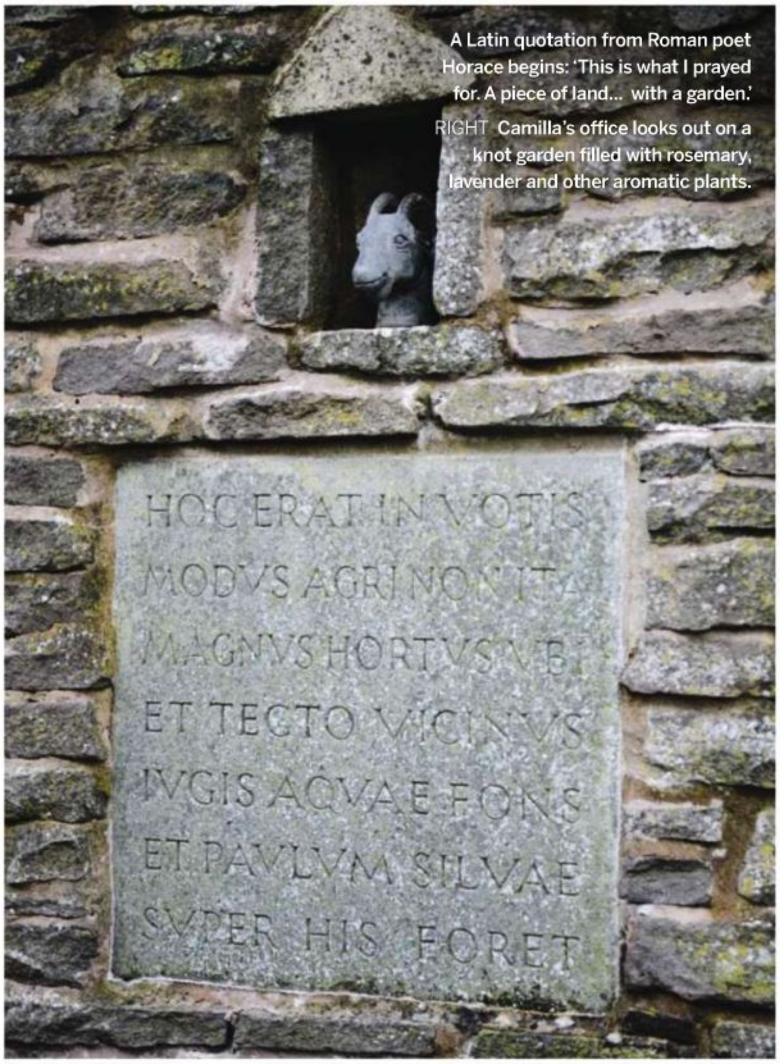
The fortified **Villa Farnese,** 170km north of Rome, is set in an impressive Renaissance garden. Jeremy advises taking the path through the chestnut woods to the secret garden. Hidden away here are rustic walls, water staircases, fountains and even a loggia known as the 'House of Pleasure'.

Thirty kilometres north at Bomarzo, the surreal world of the **Parco dei Mostri** (Park of Monsters) almost cocks a snook at the formality of Villa Farnese. Here there are tilting towers, statues of elephants, giants and dragons. The monstrous, gaping mouth to Hell bears the inscription: 'Leave reason behind'; its lolling tongue forms a picnic table.

ADAM HODGE / WWW.OXFORDBOTANICA.COM; BILDARCHIV MONHEIM GMBH / ALAMY

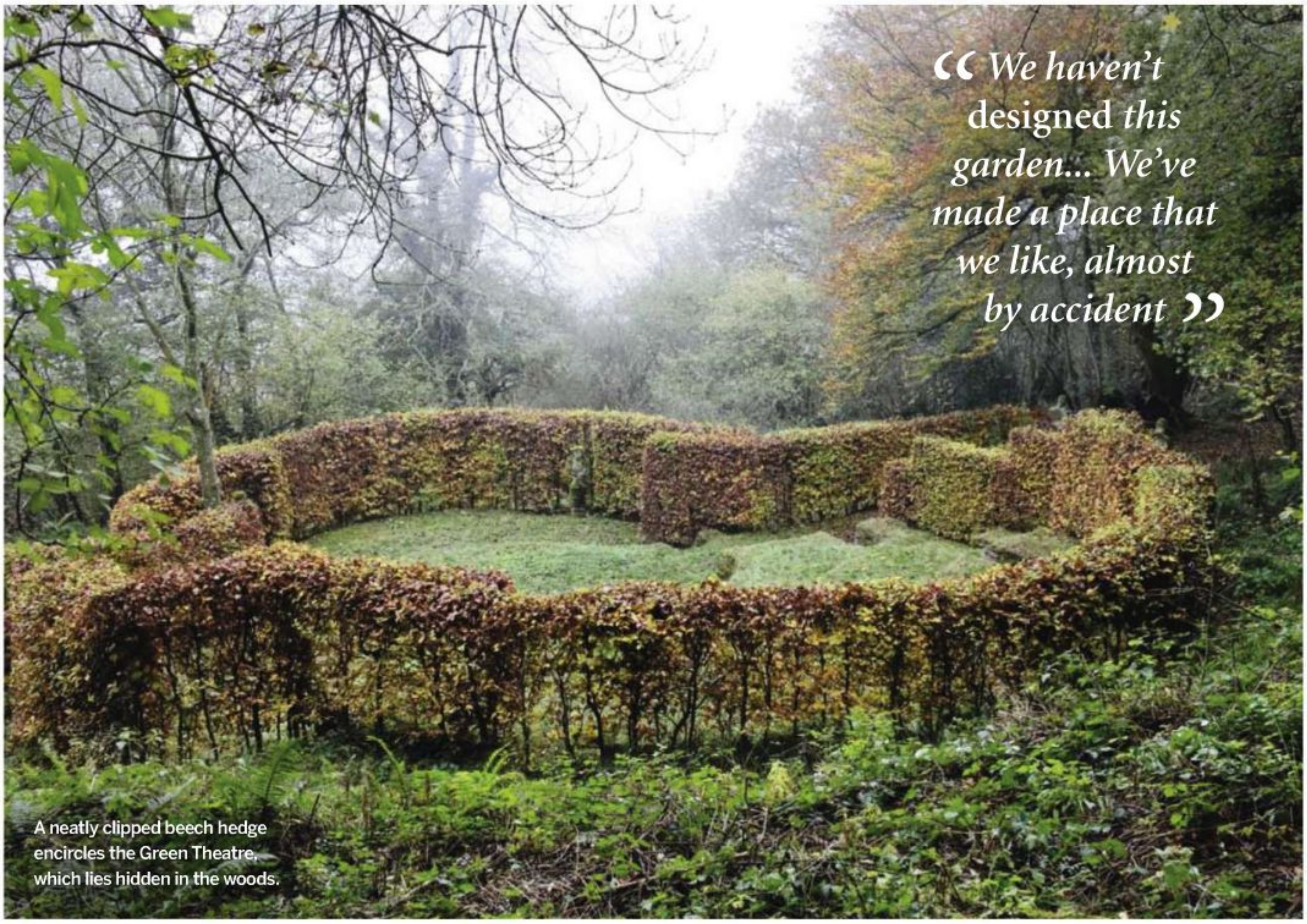
A niche in the stone wall shelters for pots of tender, winter-flowering Persian cyclamen, *C. persicum*.

LEFT Traditional drystone walls retain the sloping land in a series of terraces.


HOC ERAT IN VOTIS
MODVS AGRI NON ITA
MAGNVS HORTVS VBI
ET TECTO VICINVS
IVGIS AQVAE FONS
ET PAVLVM SILVAE
SVPER HIS FORET

A Latin quotation from Roman poet Horace begins: 'This is what I prayed for. A piece of land… with a garden.'

RIGHT Camilla's office looks out on a knot garden filled with rosemary, lavender and other aromatic plants.



> *We haven't designed this garden... We've made a place that we like, almost by accident*

A neatly clipped beech hedge encircles the Green Theatre, which lies hidden in the woods.

▷ every turn. A tree house that wants to be a galleon, stone carvings hidden in the undergrowth, and the bust of what might be some long-forgotten Roman nobleman. Into the stone walls are carved the names of tribes Jeremy has worked with. At the entrance to the wood is a "trophy wall" that includes a piece of Etruscan pottery that Jeremy rescued in the 1960s, and a Mongolian roof tile: artifacts and fragments of his life and journeys.

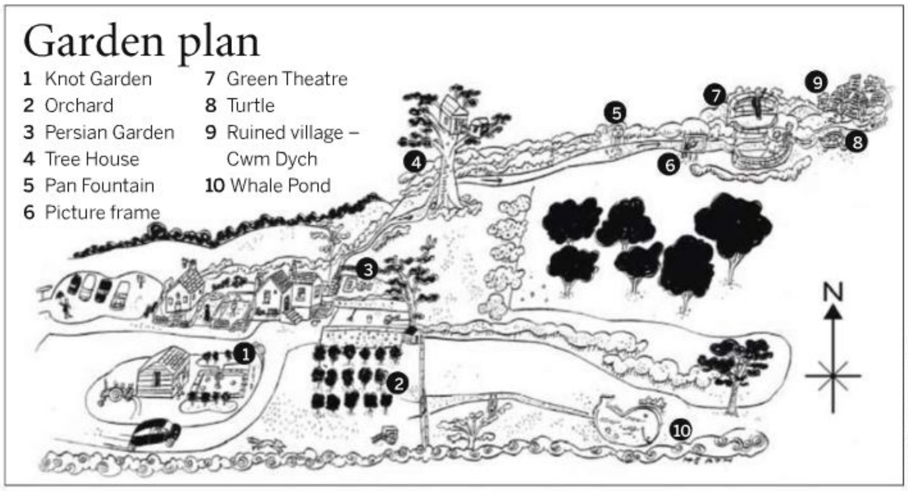
There are clearings where Jeremy and Camilla want to convey a sense of the garden attempting to impose itself on the "wild woods". Camilla is a plantswoman, and in these clearings she has established pools of wood anemone and drifts of trillium. Under a large beech the ground is polka-dotted with bright-red species tulips. "It's hard work to get plants established in these conditions," she says. "You persevere, keep planting and then one day, when you have almost forgotten about them, you turn around and you have a mass of happy plants." On the day I visit, the wood anemones are singing.

I marvel at the couple's energy and imagination, but they are self-effacing. "We haven't *designed* this garden," says Camilla. "It is for us; it's not something we have made for anyone else. We've made a place that we like, almost by accident." It seems to me that serendipity is only part of the story. This garden is the result of a lot of reflection, plantsmanship and a lifetime of looking at gardens and thinking about nature.

Jeremy and Camilla's garden is an enigma, woven through with histories, memories and stories. Are the old stone walls new or were they always there? Are the huge stone urns genuine and what are they doing hidden in a wood? Is the whale-shaped lake natural or man-made? Everywhere the lines between nature and artifice are gloriously indistinct. The effect is mysterious but always intriguing and beautiful.

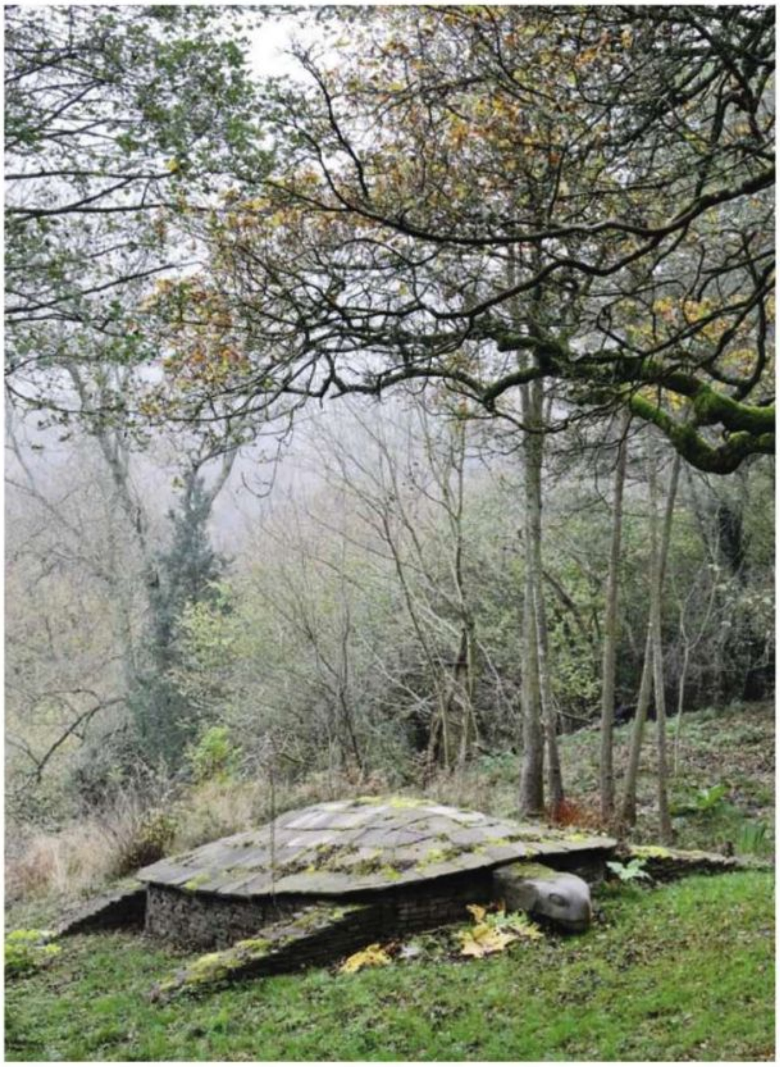
On the way home my mind is buzzing with the ideas and images I have seen in this extraordinary garden. I miss my travelling companion from the morning. I want to tell him what I have seen – those hills *do* hide a gem of a garden. □

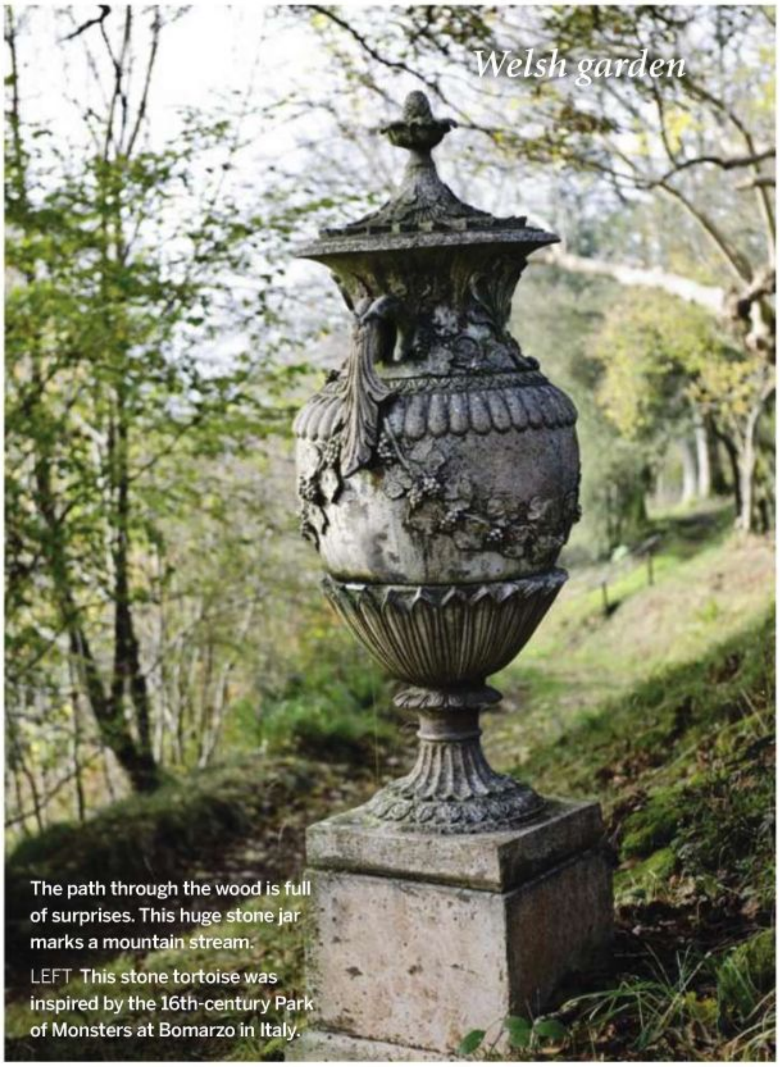
OPEN DAYS The Swifts' garden is open to the public on 11 and 12 June 2011, 2pm to 6pm, The Pant, Fforest Coalpit, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire NP7 7LT.



Garden plan

PLAN BY MICHAEL HEATH



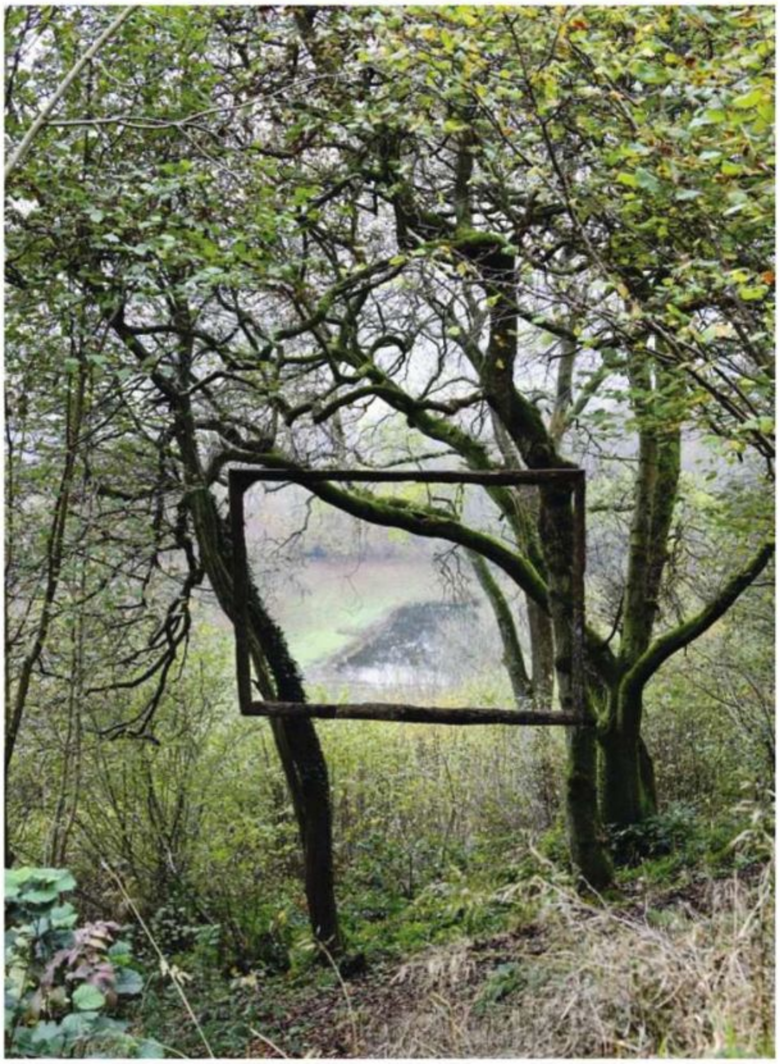


The path through the wood is full of surprises. This huge stone jar marks a mountain stream.

LEFT This stone tortoise was inspired by the 16th-century Park of Monsters at Bomarzo in Italy.

Jeremy and Camilla have carefully placed objects in the woodland to intrigue and amuse visitors.

RIGHT As if in an art gallery, a rustic picture frame looks out on a view of the whale pond.



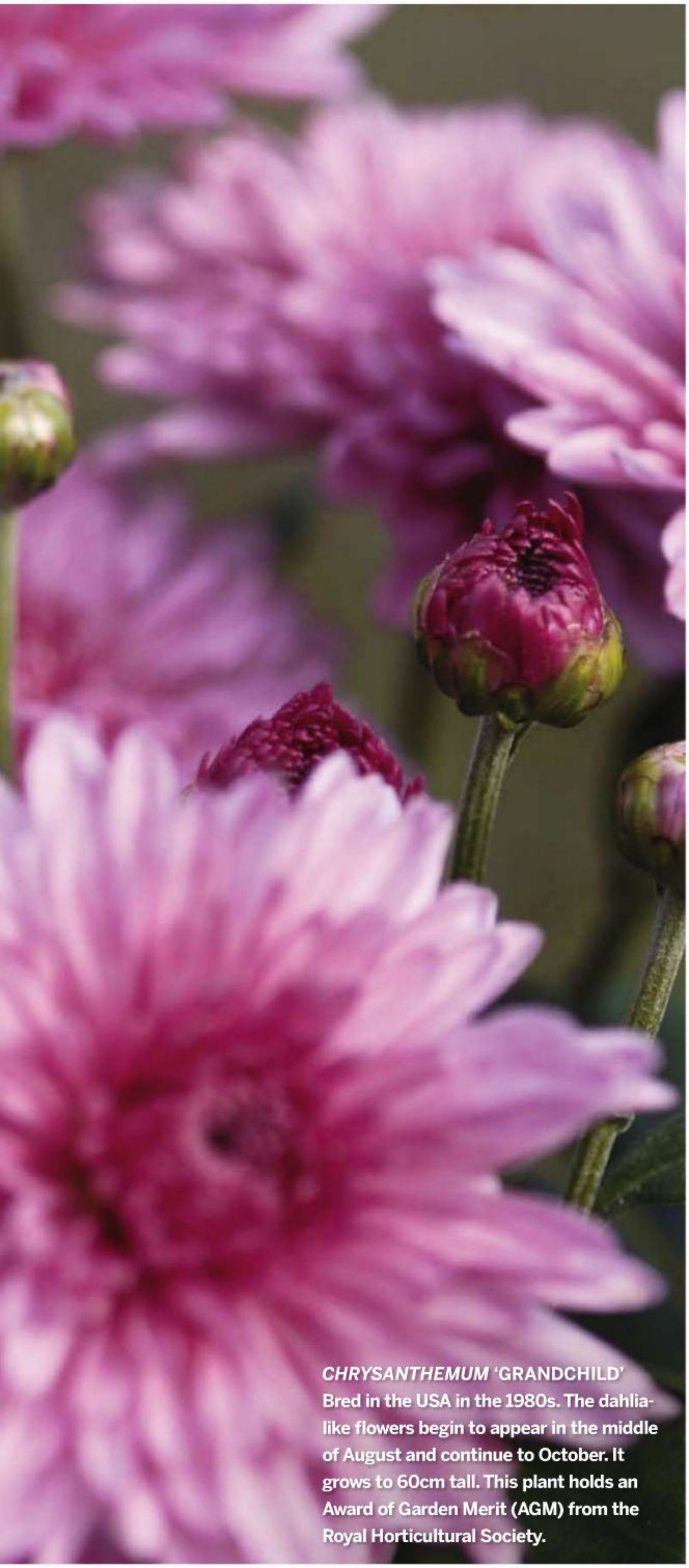
Hardy chrysanthemums

For their ability to bring a rare splash of intense colour at the end of the season, these often overlooked plants deserve the chance to shine in your garden

WORDS **JOHN HOYLAND** PHOTOGRAPHS **TORIE CHUGG**

In brief

WHAT **Genus of five to ten species, with more than 5,000 recorded cultivars in various shapes and colours.**
SIZE **Flower heads vary from 2.5cm across to 30cm; plant heights from 30cm to 2m.**
CONDITIONS **Some chrysanthemums dislike frost and wet weather, but this profile concentrates on hardy forms that tolerate most soils in a sunny position.**
SEASON **Most forms flower between late summer and autumn.**
ORIGINS **Central and northern Russia, China, Japan, parts of the Arctic.**



CHRYSANTHEMUM 'GRANDCHILD' Bred in the USA in the 1980s. The dahlia-like flowers begin to appear in the middle of August and continue to October. It grows to 60cm tall. This plant holds an Award of Garden Merit (AGM) from the Royal Horticultural Society.

John Hoyland is a plantsman, garden writer and owner of Pioneer Nurseries in Letchworth, Hertfordshire.

The mists and mellow fruitfulness of autumn are fading rapidly into winter, and we are left with piles of damp leaves, the scent of bonfires and one rare plant to remind us of the heady days of summer: the chrysanthemum.

Like many gardeners, I have come late to the pleasures of chrysanthemums. Horrified by the cellophane-wrapped specimens on garage forecourts and wary, if I'm honest, of a plant called, simply, 'mums', I had given the whole genus a wide berth. To round off my feelings of aversion, I had the idea that they were temperamental and difficult to grow. But prejudice and ignorance were swept away a few years ago on a visit to see the National Collection of hardy chrysanthemums.

In my own garden the asters were already blackened by frosts and the dahlias a pile of mush, so I was sceptical of seeing anything of interest as I trudged through the November cold. And then, there they were, sparkling in the clear, crisp light: row upon row of jewel-like flowers, flashes of russet, red, and copper, the mantel of autumn, and, incredibly, the pinks, clear whites and sunshine yellows of summer. All withstanding the first frosts, clearly hardy and easy to grow. Hallelujah! I was converted.

So why is it that chrysanthemums have been so neglected over the past 50 years? ▷

Growing chrysanths

POSITION **Chrysanthemums are adaptable plants that prefer to be grown in an open, sunny situation.**

SOIL **They will tolerate both well-drained soil and heavy clay, but all types of soil should be well-prepared by digging in lots of organic matter before planting.**

WATERING **Chrysanthemums have shallow roots and won't go looking for moisture, so in dry summers you may have to water them occasionally.**

CUT BACK STEMS **National Collection holder Judy Barker recommends cutting the dead stems back to the ground in December rather than waiting for spring to do the job. This reduces the possibility of disease occurring in the dying foliage and spreading to the following season's growth.**

DIG UP PLANTS AND THIN OUT **Chrysanthemums are vigorous and form dense plants. Every two or three years it is advisable to dig up plants and thin them out. Overcrowding can lead to plants developing rust, which weakens them and looks unsightly.**

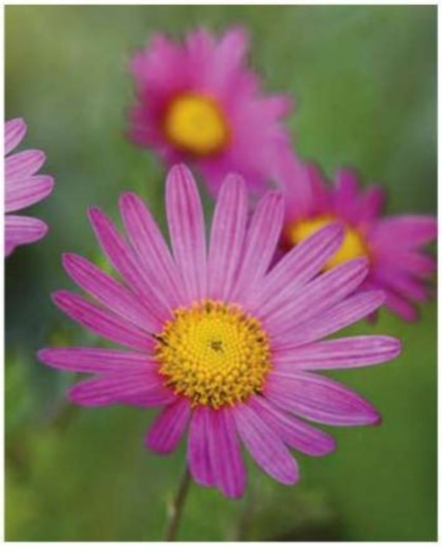
> *“Chrysanthemums are vigorous and form dense plants. Every two or three years it is advisable to dig up plants and thin them out”*

▷ During the early 20th century in France, and in Britain in the 1920s and in America in the 1930s, plant breeders were busy producing dozens of new cultivars that were hardy and easy to grow. By the end of the 1930s, they were the most popular herbaceous plant in British gardens. But with the advent of the Second World War most flower gardens were turned over to vegetable production and, with nurseries also digging for victory and no national plant repository, many cultivars of herbaceous plants were lost.

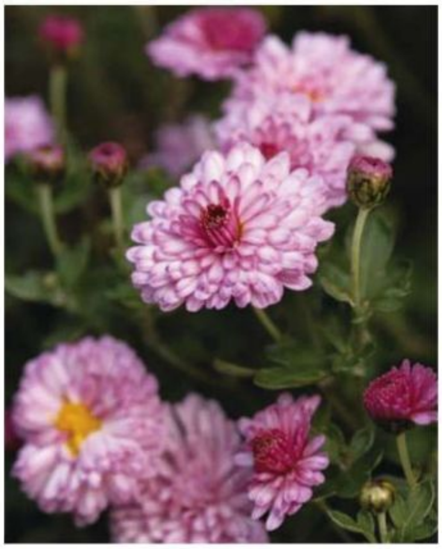
Ironically, because of its popularity, the chrysanthemum family suffered more than most. The cultivars that did survive were predominantly those that were commercially valuable as cut flowers or those that were grown by chrysanthemum enthusiasts for flower show competitions. Both types need mollycoddling and fretting over, and are of no practical value in the harsh world of the garden. A generation of gardeners, which includes myself, came to believe that chrysanthemums were fussy, fragile and difficult to grow, and it is only recently – thanks in part to people like National Collection holder Judy Barker, who have tracked down old, hardy kinds – that we can once again appreciate this late-flowering marvel.

The breeding begins

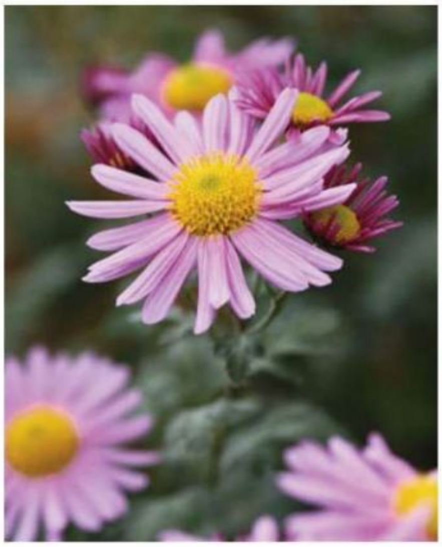
There are two main groups of hardy chrysanthemums: the Rubellum Group, thought to comprise selections and hybrids of *C. zawadskii*; and Korean Group hybrids, dwarf forms thought to descend from *C.* x *grandiflorum*. So much hybridising has taken place that is impossible to identify each group's parentage. One thing that can be ▷



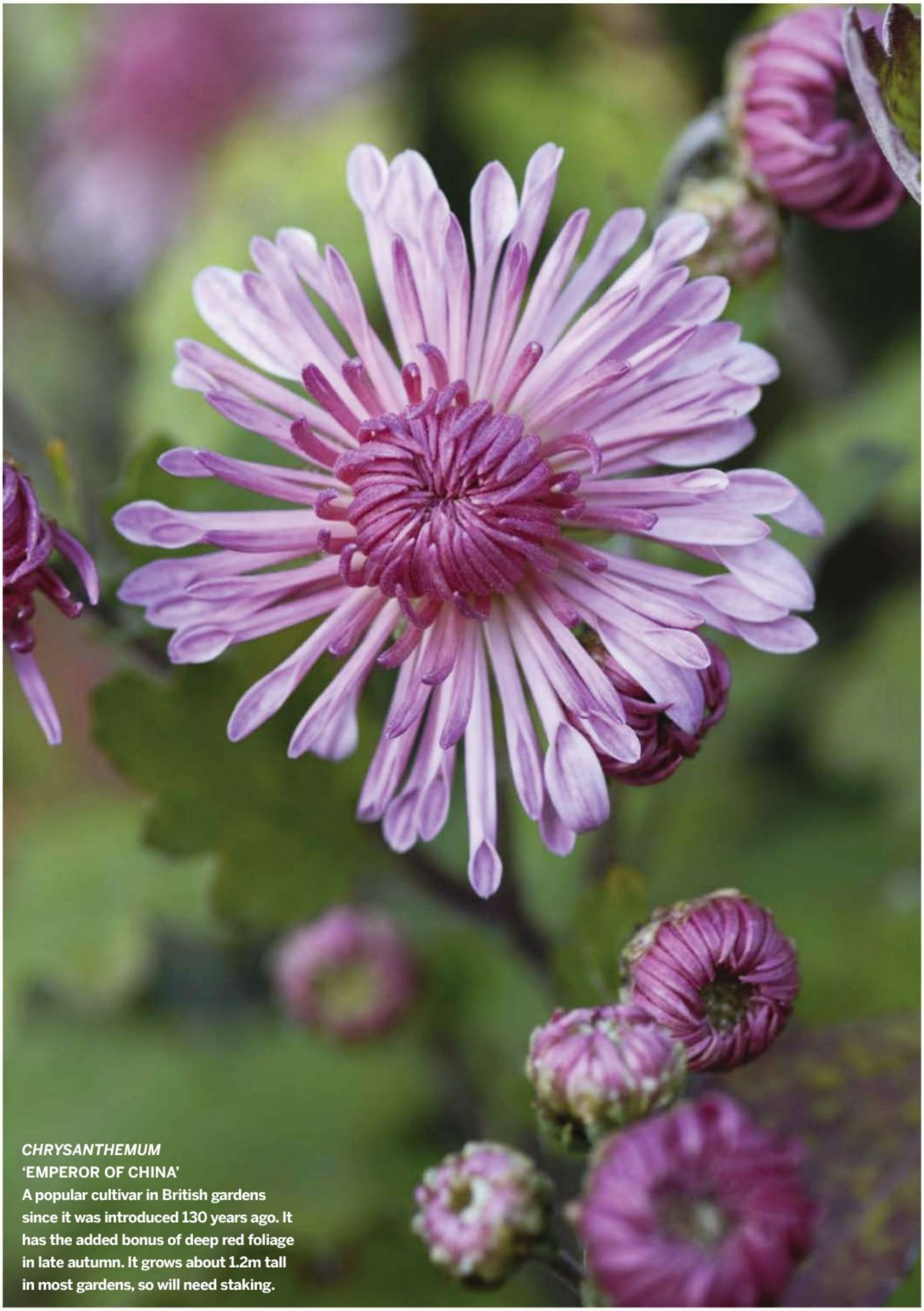
***CHRYSANTHEMUM* 'TAPESTRY ROSE'**
A multi-stemmed plant that has clusters of flowers into November. When used in bouquets the flowers last for up to two weeks. It grows to a height of 90cm.



***C.* 'MEI-KYO'**
A dense and compact mound of flowers throughout September and October. The result of chrysanthemum breeding in Japan in the 1950s. It grows to 50cm tall.



***C.* 'CARMINE BLUSH'**
Despite the delicate-looking flowers, this cultivar will withstand the worst of the weather until mid-November. It grows to about 60cm tall. An AGM holder.



CHRYSANTHEMUM
'EMPEROR OF CHINA'
A popular cultivar in British gardens since it was introduced 130 years ago. It has the added bonus of deep red foliage in late autumn. It grows about 1.2m tall in most gardens, so will need staking.

CHRYSANTHEMUM
'BREITNER'S SUPREME'
The brightness of this white-flowered cultivar is dazzling on grey days. Flowering from mid September onwards, it is a compact plant up to 45cm tall.

> *“Breeding of Rubellum types began in Britain in the 1920s and continued until the war”*

▷ known is that both groups have a lineage of vigorous and hardy plants.

Breeding of Rubellum types began in Britain in the 1920s and continued until the outbreak of war. In 1939 the Middlesex nursery of Amos Perry produced *C.* 'Clara Curtis', which has pink, single daisy-like flowers and grows to about 70cm tall. It starts flowering in September and is usually worn out by November. A plant with similar flowers that can pick up the baton from Clara is *C.* 'Carmine Blush' (see page 60), which will start flowering at the end of October.

C. 'Emperor of China' (page 61) is a far older Rubellum type, dating from the 1880s, when it was championed as a good garden plant by William Robinson. Like *C.* 'Carmine Blush' it has soft pink flowers but this time with spoon-shaped petals and a crimson central boss. It reaches 1.2m tall, which means that it does have to be staked. As the temperature drops, its leaves turn a burnished deep red and mahogany colour.

Another with daisy-shaped flowers, but with peach-coloured petals, is *C.* 'Mary Stoker' (below left). This was also bred by Amos Perry and is a floriferous plant, about 70cm tall. The brightest chrysanthemum with daisy-like flowers is *C.* 'Breitner's Supreme' (opposite). This is a more compact plant, 45cm tall, with sparkling-white flowers.

Compact hybrids

The Korean hybrids were developed in the United States during the 1930s by a Connecticut breeder, Alex Cummings. One of the plants he used in his programme was *C. coreanum*, which had been collected by the famous planthunter Ernest Wilson while on an expedition to northern Korea for the ▷

National Collection and plant trials

Judith Barker's National Collection of Korean, Rubellum and hardy spray chrysanthemums is open to small groups only, by appointment, in September and October 2011.
64 Morris Way, London Colney,
Hertfordshire AL2 1JN.
Tel 01727 822564, www.nccpg.com

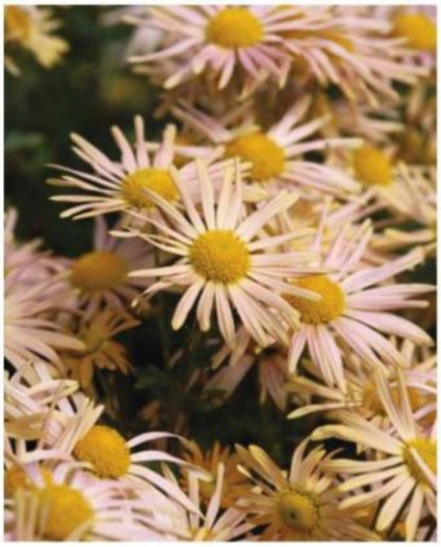
The Royal Horticultural Society has begun its largest trial of hardy chrysanthemums and will be assessing plants, including 100 from the National Collection, during 2010 and 2011. Visit the trial beds at RHS Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB.

In 2009, as part of another chrysanthemum trial, the organisation gave an Award of Garden Merit (AGM) to five hardy plants:

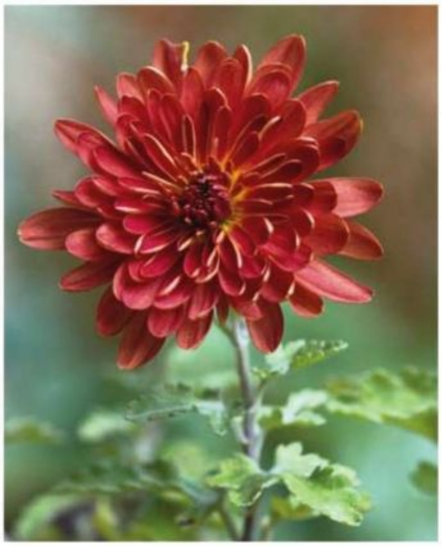
C. 'Aunt Millicent' – A cultivar from the 1940s, recently rediscovered in a Kent garden, with pale silvery-pink flowers.

C. 'Perry's Peach' – An old, unnamed cultivar that was recently re-named by the nursery that found it. The single flowers are a soft peach colour.

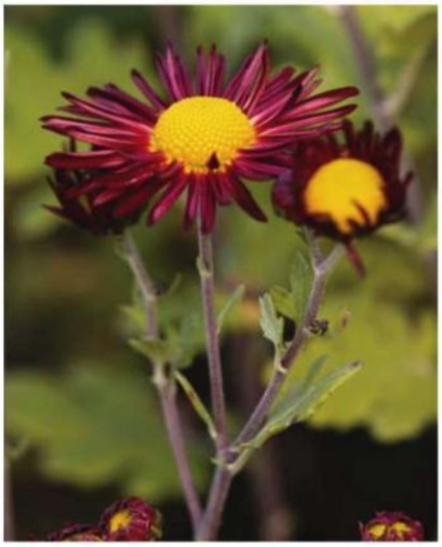
C. 'Nell Gwynn' – flowers from July to October; its pale pink petals deepen in colour as the season gets colder. The last two AGMs went to 'Grandchild' (p 58) and 'Carmine Blush' (p 60).



CHRYSANTHEMUM **'MARY STOKER'**
One of many hardy chrysanthemums bred at Amos Perry's nursery in the 1940s, this is a floriferous cultivar that begins to flower in mid September. 70cm tall.



C. **'CHELSEA PHYSIC GARDEN'**
An old cultivar dating from the early 1900s, no one seems to know what connection the plant actually has with the famous garden. An imposing plant that grows to 80cm tall.



C. **'ROYAL COMMAND'**
The dark red pleated petals are in stark contrast to the large golden centre of the flower. One of the last cultivars to flower, it is at its best in November. 70cm tall.

Where to see

The best gardens in which to see chrysanthemums growing are RHS Wisley in Surrey (see details under *National collections and plant trials*, page 63) and the gardens attached to Norwell nurseries in Nottinghamshire (see below for details).

Where to buy

- Cotswold Garden Flowers, Sands Lane, Badsey, Worcestershire WR11 7EZ. Tel 01386 422829 (mail order) or 01386 833849 (enquiries), www.cgf.net
- Halls of Heddon, Heddon on the Wall, Newcastle upon Tyne NE15 0JS. Tel 01661 852445, www.hallsofheddon.co.uk
- Norwell Nurseries, Woodhouse Road, Norwell, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG23 6JX. Tel 01636 636337. www.norwellnurseries.co.uk
- Southview Nurseries, Chequers Lane, Eversley Cross, Hook, Hampshire RG27 0NT. Tel 0118 973 2206 www.southviewnurseries.co.uk

THANKS TO: Cotswold Garden Flowers and Norwell Nurseries, where the photographs in this feature were taken.

> *“Chrysanthemums with flowers the colour of autumn are perhaps the easiest to place in the garden”*

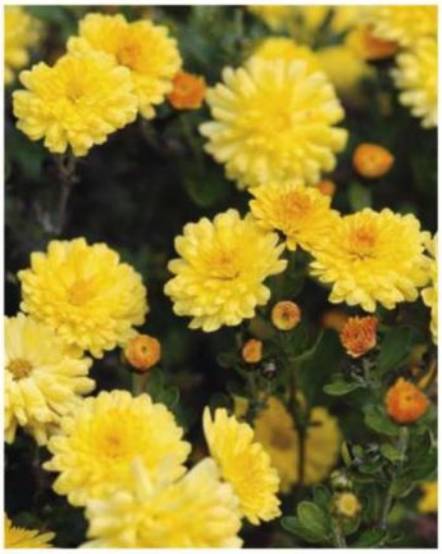
▷ Arnold Arboretum in Boston. In general, these hybrids are shorter and bushier than the Rubellums. *C.* 'Ruby Mound' has deep-red double flowers and grows to about 45cm tall. Slightly taller at 55cm is *C.* 'Wedding Day'. White petals surround a yellow-green centre, fading to cream as the flowers age.

Best for autumn colour

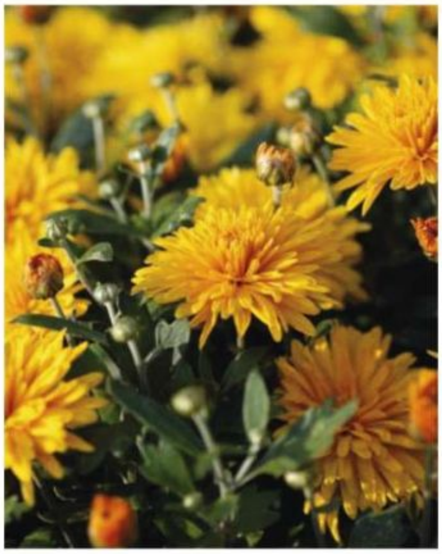
Chrysanthemums with flowers the colour of autumn are perhaps the easiest to place in the garden. *C.* 'Paul Boissier' (pictured opposite) has sprays of semi-double, bronzy-orange flowers that look good growing with the darker bronze flowers of *C.* 'Chelsea Physic Garden' (page 63). Both are strong, upright plants about 80cm tall and both make good cut flowers. I've not tried it yet but I think that adding *C.* 'Ruby Raynor' (below) to the group would make a perfect trio. Its double flowers are a dark golden-yellow, the colour of birch leaves before they fall.

As with any genus, you quickly find out which cultivars suit your own garden best. The two that I like most are both low-growing, domed plants about 50cm tall that echo the shape of the dark-leaved sedums that surround them. *C.* 'Mei-Kyo' (page 60) is covered with small, button-shaped mauve flowers; *C.* 'Nantyderry Sunshine' (below left) has similar flowers that are, as its name suggests, a sunshine yellow. They are so improbably healthy and happy when nearly everything else has finished that they put a smile on your face even on the most miserable of late-autumn days. They stand as a reproach and a reminder: to never again ignore an entire genus through snobbery, ignorance or any other reason. □

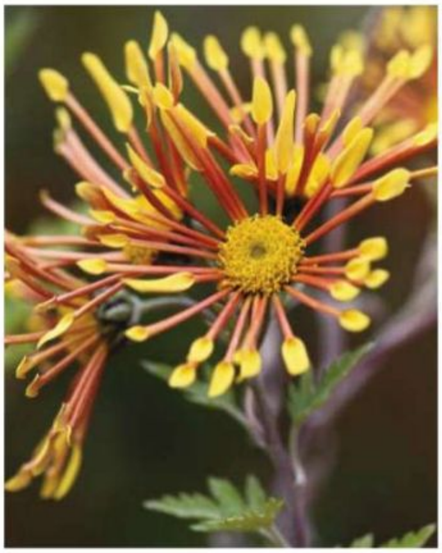
NEXT MONTH Winter-flowering clematis



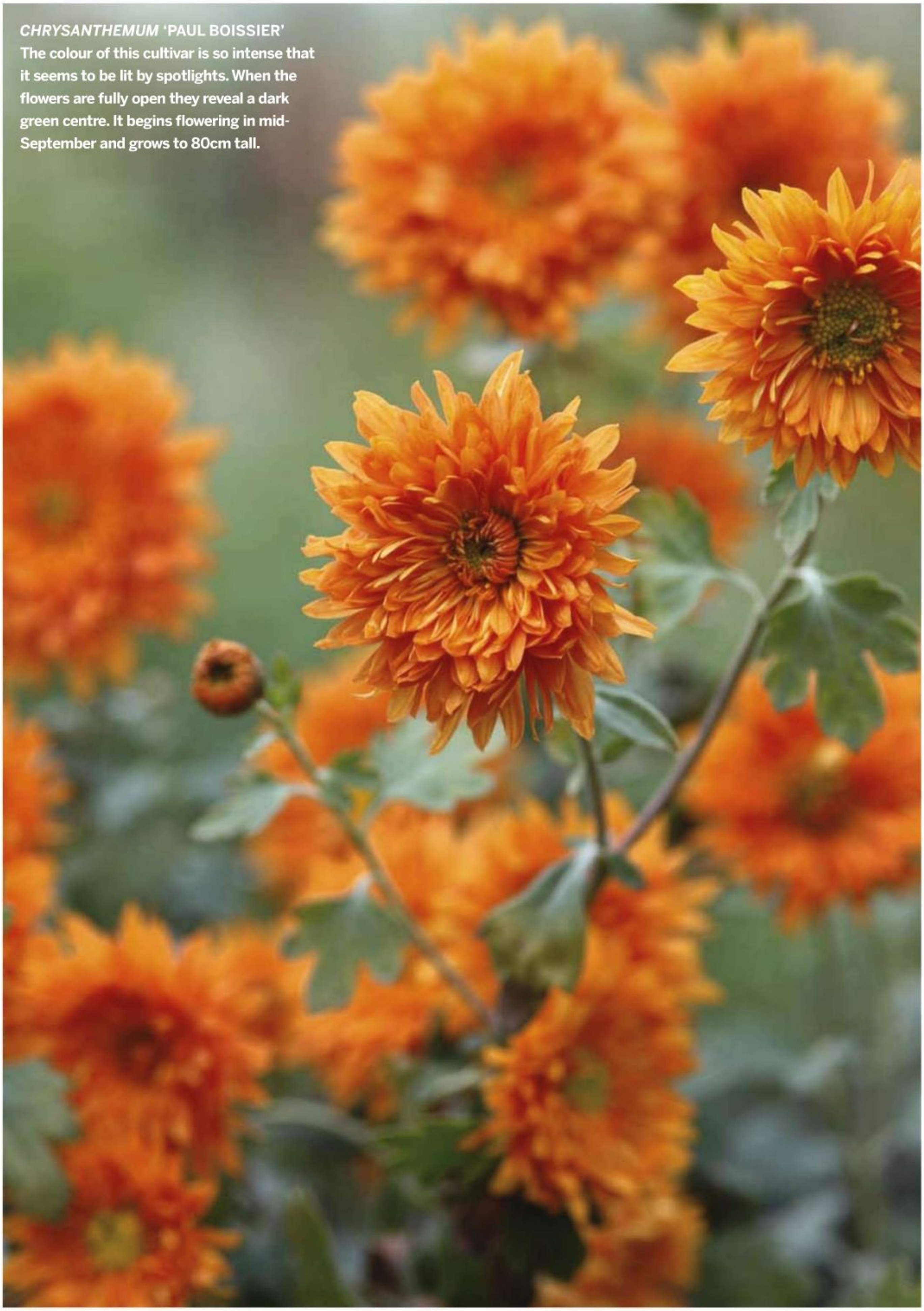
***CHRYSANTHEMUM* 'NANTYDERRY SUNSHINE'**
A compact dome about 50cm tall, covered in small flowers from September to November. The leaves turn red with colder weather.



***C.* 'RUBY RAYNOR'**
A very tough cultivar that produces masses of flowers from mid-September. Because of its prolific flowering it is widely grown by the cut-flower industry. 80cm tall.



***C.* 'BURNT ORANGE'**
The spoon-shaped petals of this unusual form are dark red on the outside with an orange interior, so the flower seem to glow. It grows to 1m tall and flowers in September and October.



***CHRYSANTHEMUM* 'PAUL BOISSIER'**
The colour of this cultivar is so intense that it seems to be lit by spotlights. When the flowers are fully open they reveal a dark green centre. It begins flowering in mid-September and grows to 80cm tall.

In brief

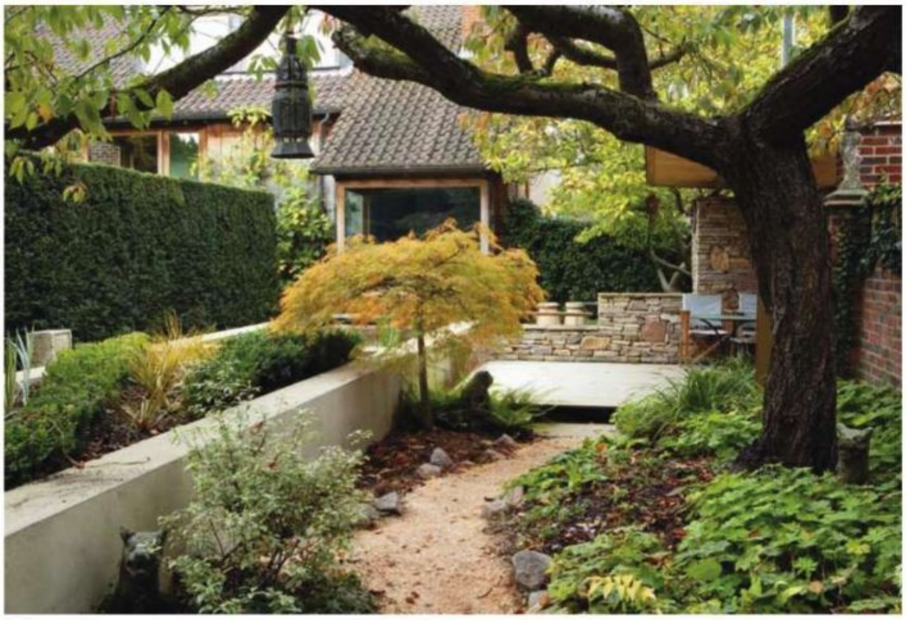
WHAT Private modern house redesigned by architect owner; garden of 'outdoor rooms' laid out by landscape architect Sam Martin.
WHERE Wimbledon, southwest London.
SOIL Clay with pockets of builders' rubble.
CONDITIONS Relatively sheltered, dry in summer.
SIZE A third of an acre.
SPECIAL FEATURES Architect-designed garden pavilion/outdoor dining room; pond.
GARDEN PLAN See page 70.

Divide and rule

Separating your garden into different spaces can make it feel larger, as this London garden proves

WORDS **MATTHEW WILSON** PHOTOGRAPHS **MARIANNE MAJERUS**

Once a parking area, the Pond Court is now a secret garden whose existence comes as a complete surprise to many visitors.



There are so many reasons gardens come to be; fortunate 'inheritance', happy accident, single-minded vision, collaborative process. Richard and Sarah-Jane Holden's garden in Wimbledon falls very much into the latter camp. The couple bought their home in 1994, a solid, stolid 1950s detached property of the type built across Britain at that time and of modest architectural merit. But the Holdens faced an added twist; by some strange act of planning misjudgment, the house had been orientated oddly, so where a front door should have been, instead there was a blank wall. The loo and kitchen had the best view of the garden, while the major rooms looked north over a neighbour's land. Architect Richard has spent the intervening years re-orientating and re-designing the house into a modern, light, open and dynamic space – which, self-deprecatingly, he refers to as "schizophrenic" – but when input in the garden first began six years ago, the couple sought out the advice of garden designer Sam Martin.

New Zealander Sam had both Richard's professional interest and Sarah-Jane's knowledge and enthusiasm to consider and draw from. She grew up on Booroomba Station in New South Wales, famous both as a sheep station and for its garden. As she puts it, "when you're unoccupied in the bush, you take up gardening". While the first owner of the property had clearly been a gardener and had planted hedges and trees, many of which have been retained as key features in the new layout of the garden, the intervening years and odd orientation of the house hadn't helped to engender a cohesive space.

First the courtyard

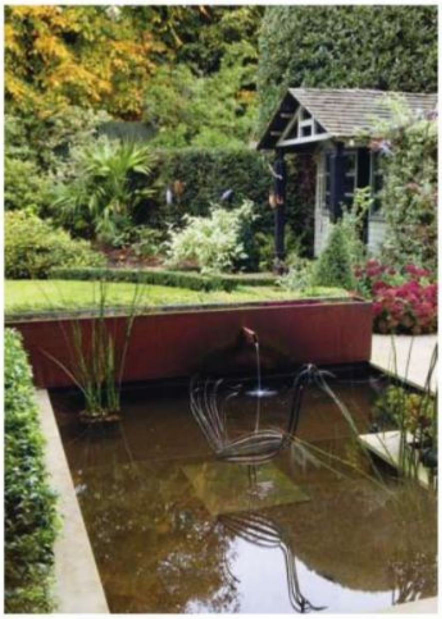
The removal of an unsightly conservatory and construction in its place of a new room overlooking the garden led to the creation of a courtyard space to the rear of the house. This is planted mainly with evergreen shrubs, clipped box hedges and swathes of white

THIS PAGE, TOP LEFT An old cherry tree shelters the Pond Court and contrasts with the sleek lines of the pond and raised bed.

TOP RIGHT The feathery foliage of *Acer palmatum* var. *dissectum* turns from green to gold in autumn. Reaching a height of just 2m, it thrives in the shelter and partial shade of small urban gardens.

RIGHT The old Japanese cherry bears richly coloured autumn leaves, and blossom in spring.

FAR RIGHT An L-shaped pool with raised weathered-steel trough lies next to the terrace at the northern edge of the garden.



THIS PAGE, FAR LEFT On warm days, owners Richard and Sarah-Jane Holden love to eat out in their timber and stone pavilion.

LEFT The bright leaves of *Tiarella* 'Iron Butterfly' provides good ground cover in the dappled shade beneath the cherry tree.

BOTTOM LEFT Late in the season, a bold swathe of *Sedum* 'Herbstfreude' brings rich colour to this planting by the house.

BOTTOM RIGHT Sam Martin (centre) worked closely on his design with owners Richard and Sarah-Jane Holden.

busy lizzies, along with a bold drift of glowing *Sedum* 'Herbstfreude' (formerly 'Autumn Joy', pictured below). The centrepiece is a cool and calming L-shaped pool (pictured on opposite page, bottom right) with a raised, weathered-steel trough and gently trickling water spout. The shape and volume of the trough is echoed by a clipped box hedge of the same height, which sits just below the windows of the house. Cunningly, the trough has been designed so that the water level is constantly brimming, while the water spout is, impossibly, halfway down the trough. The secret of this trickery has been shared with me but I have sworn not to tell.

> *“The centrepiece is a cool and calming L-shaped pool with a raised steel trough and gently trickling water spout”*

Hedges of varying sizes, including yew, box and the conifer *Thuja*, play a key part in the experience of the garden; screening neighbouring properties, setting up vistas, emphasising or echoing hard landscape features and, most importantly, dividing the overall space into rooms. Perhaps the most impressive of these rooms is the Pond Court (pictured on pages 66-67), a space that until three years ago was used for car parking. Discovering it comes as a complete surprise. Hemmed in by an old yew hedge on one side and the garden boundary wall on another, the space is dominated by two features: a large raised pool that, halfway along its length, becomes a raised bed, and a garden pavilion/outdoor dining room (pictured this page, top left, and opposite page, also top left). The boldness of this design, allied to the simplicity of its arrangement, is arresting. The presence of an *Acer palmatum* var. *dissectum* and an old, craggy Japanese cherry, combined with the simple execution of the pavilion and the sense of calm reflection engendered by the space, lend a superficially ▷

The bright leaves of dome-shaped *Acer palmatum* var. *dissectum* 'Viridis' stand out against the dark hedge on the southern boundary.

RIGHT Clipped box gives the planting a year-round structure.

> *" the old hedges have been re-tailored to create ... a suitably 'schizophrenic' reminder of the history of the house "*

▷ oriental feel, but the three collaborators insist this is coincidental. And although the space is small, the pool/raised bed design is also cunning. Rather than being rectangular it tapers slightly, creating the illusion that the space is longer than it is. Another simple water feature, this time a copper pipe discharging into a V-shaped raised rill and then into the pool, makes for the perfect background noise.

The main part of the garden is simply designed around a lawn. An east-facing bed comprises mainly shrubs, including *Viburnum plicatum* f. *tomentosum* 'Mariesii' and *Cotinus* 'Grace', both of which are resplendent in autumn. The west-facing bed is dominated by perennials including late-flowering *Aster* and *Helenium*, with annuals such as *Cosmos* and *Calendula officinalis*. Behind these beds the old hedges have been re-tailored to create a structural backdrop and suitably 'schizophrenic' reminder of the history of the house, and serve as a reminder of this highly effective collaboration.□

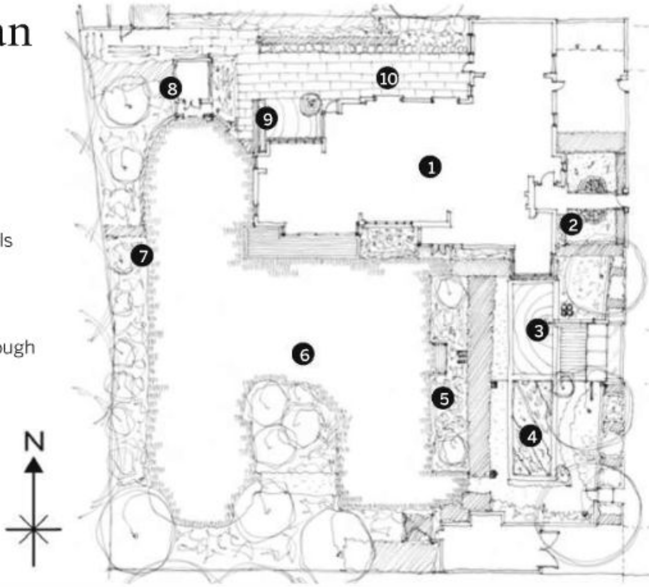
DESIGNER PROFILE

Sam Martin is a landscape architect who designed the New Zealand garden at the Savill Garden in Berkshire and Skyline Central in Manchester, a large commercial scheme, both of which can be visited. He works for Exterior Architecture, on commissions mainly for private clients, including several schemes with garden owner Richard Holden.

BBC Matthew Wilson is a garden writer, designer and lecturer, who appears regularly on *Gardeners' Question Time* (BBC Radio 4, Fridays at 2pm (repeated Sundays at 3pm).

Garden plan

1. House
2. Pavilion/outdoor dining area
3. Pool (Pond Court)
4. Raised bed
5. Bench and border of perennials and annuals
6. Lawn
7. Shrub border
8. Timber garden room
9. L-shaped pool and trough
10. Courtyard



SAM MARTIN / EXTERIOR ARCHITECTURE

Mixed perennials and annuals surround a steel seat at the edge of a west-facing border.

David Richardson

In 150 countries, gardeners maintain the graves of Commonwealth soldiers who died in the world wars. This month we meet one of those who helps to organise this massive international project

WORDS **NOËL KINGSBURY** PHOTOGRAPH **CHARLIE HOPKINSON**

Famous for their neat and orderly planting amid groomed lawns and serried ranks of identical headstones, the military cemeteries of northern France are familiar to many, and with interest in the First World War undiminished, just as much visited as ever. These are, however, only part of the world's largest horticultural workforce – the Commonwealth War Graves Commission has 900 staff, scattered all over the world, with an annual budget of £44 million. Established in 1917, the CWGC charter lays out a responsibility for the graves of all members of Commonwealth forces who died in the 20th century's two world wars.

> *“I have a strong visual sense of what I want a cemetery to look like. I then use my plant knowledge to choose plants which will create this look locally”*

David Richardson is one of the CWGC horticultural managers, until recently in charge of 350 staff in France. Since joining the organisation in 1987, he has been responsible for overseeing cemeteries in France and Asia, as well as north and west Africa. He clearly loves the job and the opportunity to travel that goes with it. He has visited around 40 countries to inspect cemeteries there. Much of his time was spent in France, and for two years he lived in Turkey, managing major cemeteries at Gallipoli.

With a family interest in gardening in his background, David did a degree in horticulture at Bath University, where he was taught by Peter Thoday, a teacher with a world-class reputation. After college he immediately took a job with the CWGC.

France has far and away the largest number of cemeteries, but it is inevitably the more exotic or unusual locations that come out in conversation, among them the Reykjavik War Cemetery in Iceland. “That was quite a pioneering one,” he recalls. “We got school kids to help us plant grasses.” David clearly enjoyed Singapore – “it's wonderful and tropical, and they can afford a big staff.” Burma, though, is his favourite. “We employ 30 gardeners at five locations, on good terms by local standards, in a country which we all know is difficult. It's a 12-hour journey by road from the airport to get to the cemeteries on the Thai border, where most of the burials are.” Travelling to remote areas that were once battlefields in the 20th century's great conflicts can mean reaching places closed to other outsiders, as with Nagaland, in India's troubled northeast. “I have an affinity with India,” he says, “but in Nagaland I was put under house arrest once for not having the proper permits.”

David is a people person, and in his new job he has come back to England, to the organisation's headquarters – “I'm in human resources,” he says. “I've always been interested in the management of people, how we look after our staff.” It means a lot to him that “there are places where people work for years without any contact with us, then you get there and the cemeteries are immaculate.”

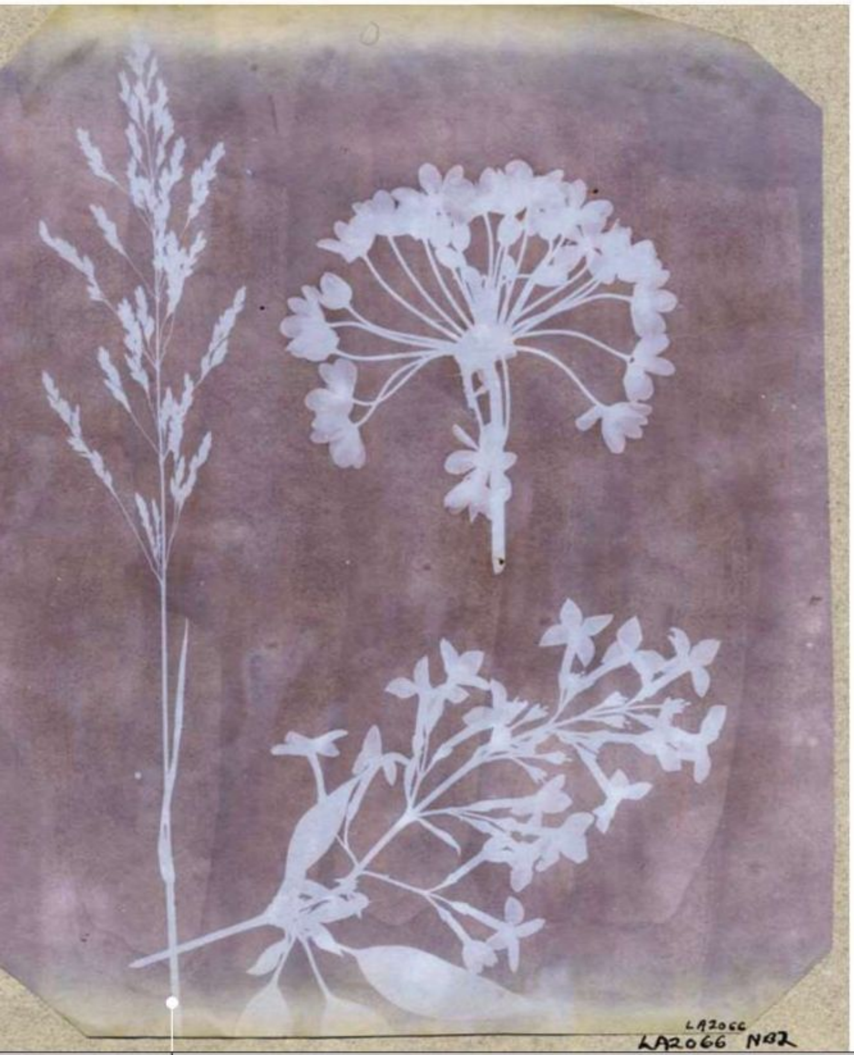
At the core of the commission's approach is what David describes as “a standard design based on a Gertrude Jekyll look [her collaborator Sir Edwin Lutyens was actively involved in designing the cemeteries], which can be recreated almost anywhere.” He describes how “I have a strong visual sense of what I want a cemetery to look like. I then use my plant knowledge to choose plants which will create this look locally.” Many might see the standard look as formulaic, old-fashioned and unsustainable, but he describes how “we are always looking for innovation, part of which is about labour-saving but is also about ways of making cemetery-management more sustainable. A current priority, for example, is to find alternatives to using pre-emergent herbicides. We are also looking at more drought-tolerant plantings, and can call on an international staff to design gardens for possible climate change.

David is sympathetic to creating a more naturalistic look, but recognises that popular expectations of cemeteries are deeply conservative, and that “we are very constrained by our charter. We have put *some* more naturalistic borders in. For example, I've worked with Paul and Pauline McBride [now based at Sussex Prairies] on a naturalistic planting for the Lutyens memorial at Thiepval on the Somme.”

Now that he is back home, David can finally make a garden of his own. “I haven't often lived where there is a possibility of having a garden. I'm very much looking forward to growing my own veg and pottering about, and I'm so envious of friends with greenhouses.” The head gardener in chief can finally return to getting soil under his fingernails again.□

BBC Remembrance Sunday takes place on 14 November this year. See *Radio Times* for details of BBC radio and television coverage.

NEXT MONTH Topher Delaney



A photogenic drawing by William Henry Fox Talbot using botanical specimens from his garden. Taken around 1839, the year he announced his discoveries in photography.

William Henry Fox Talbot (1800-1877) made his name in photography, but was also interested in archaeology and politics, serving as a reformist Member of Parliament between 1832 and 1835.

Talbot's photograph of his family home, Lacock Abbey, was taken in 1844 and appeared in his book *The Pencil Of Nature*.

The garden in early art photography

The first photographers found themselves drawn to plants and gardens – a natural affinity that continues today

WORDS MARY KOCOL

The garden had a significant presence in early photography during the Victorian era. Several British inventors and pioneering artist-photographers either kept a garden or studied botany.

Some of the first photographs ever taken were of plants. The founder of modern photography, William Henry Fox Talbot, took specimens from his botanic garden at Lacock Abbey in Wiltshire for these pioneering images. He used the paper negative-positive process he had invented in 1834, the precursor to the technology used in almost all photography of the 19th and 20th centuries. [The daguerreotype, invented in France by Louis Daguerre in 1839, briefly rivalled Talbot's system but proved too labour-intensive.] Talbot later wrote that 'The first kind of objects I attempted to copy by this process were flowers and leaves, either fresh or selected from my herbarium. These it renders with the utmost truth and fidelity, exhibiting

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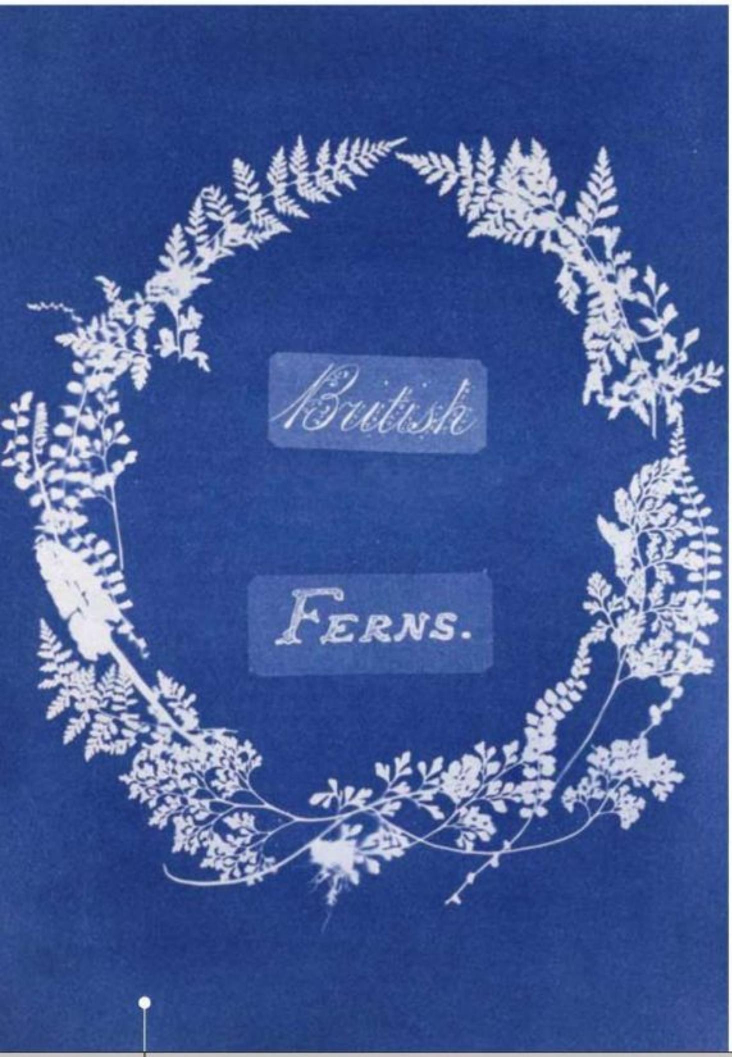
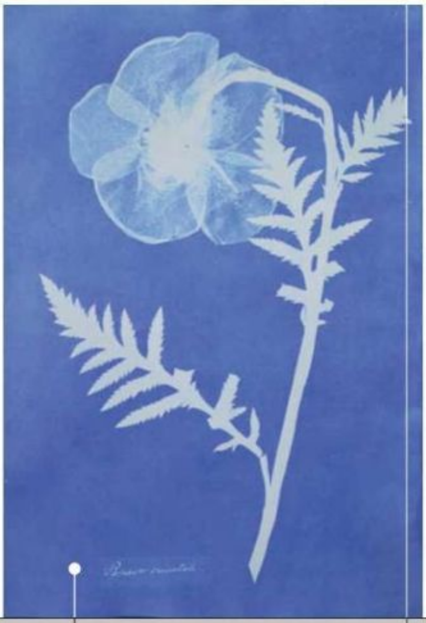


Anna Atkins (1799-1871) produced a series of detailed plant portraits in her *Cyanotypes of British and Foreign Flowering Plants and Ferns*, 1854.



This image by Atkins, taken in 1871, shows how cyanotypes can reveal the delicate, almost transparent parts of some plants.

Dimbola Lodge, the Isle of Wight home of Julia Margaret Cameron, pictured in 1871. The house is now a museum.

Cameron and colleague Oscar Gustave Rejlander made this portrait of Kate Dore in about 1862; pictograms of ferns comprise the 'frame'.

even the venation of the leaves, the minute hairs that clothe the plant.' In 1844 he produced his first book of 'photogenic drawings', *The Pencil of Nature*.

Talbot had a huge range of interests, including botany. He planted many trees and replanted the kitchen garden at his home, Lacock Abbey. He also added greenhouses to enlarge his collection of tender and exotic plants. The gardens and greenhouse at Lacock Abbey are now in excellent condition, having been restored by the National Trust in 1999. Talbot's own notebooks helped the trust to recreate the gardens as they were in Talbot's day.

Talbot even played a role in safeguarding the botanical gardens at Kew. By 1838 the gardens were in decline and threatened with closure. Talbot petitioned the council of the Linnean Society to establish the National Botanic Garden at Kew, and his friend William Hooker was appointed its first director.

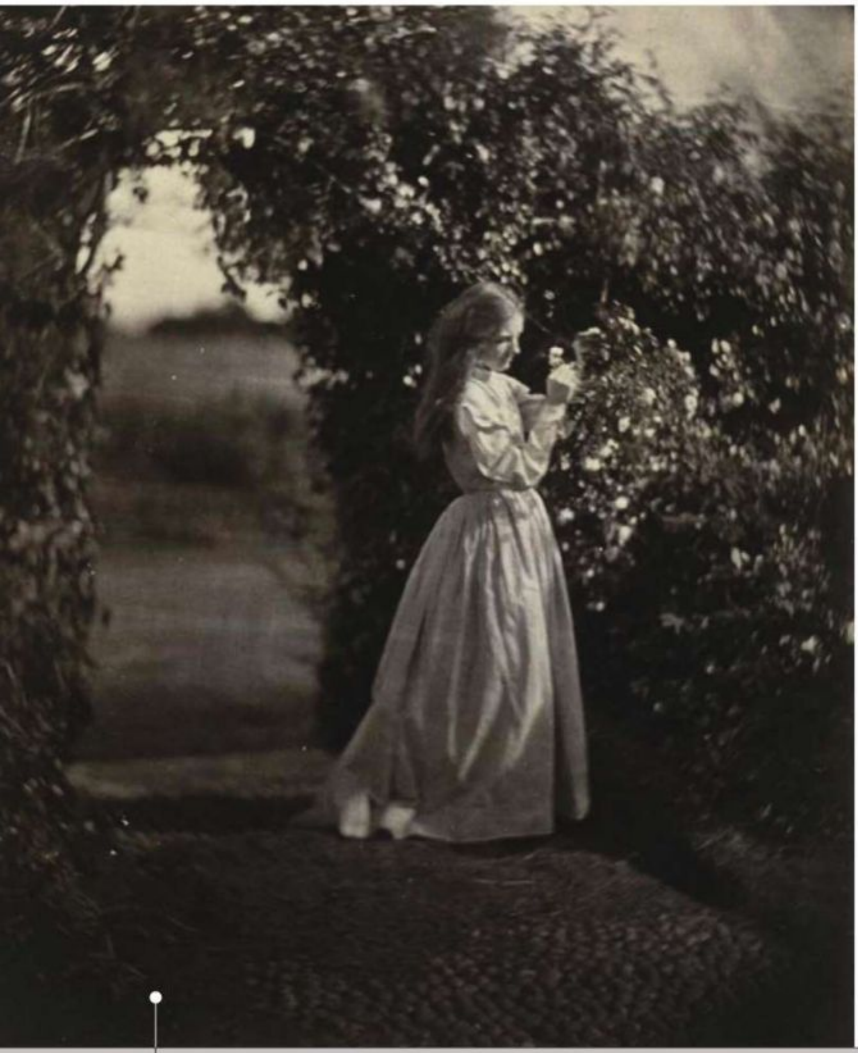
Botany meets the cyanotype

In October 1843 Anna Atkins, an amateur botanist from Kent, produced the first photo-illustrated book using the cyanotype process: *British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions*. It was the also first book in any field printed using photography in place of typesetting and illustration.

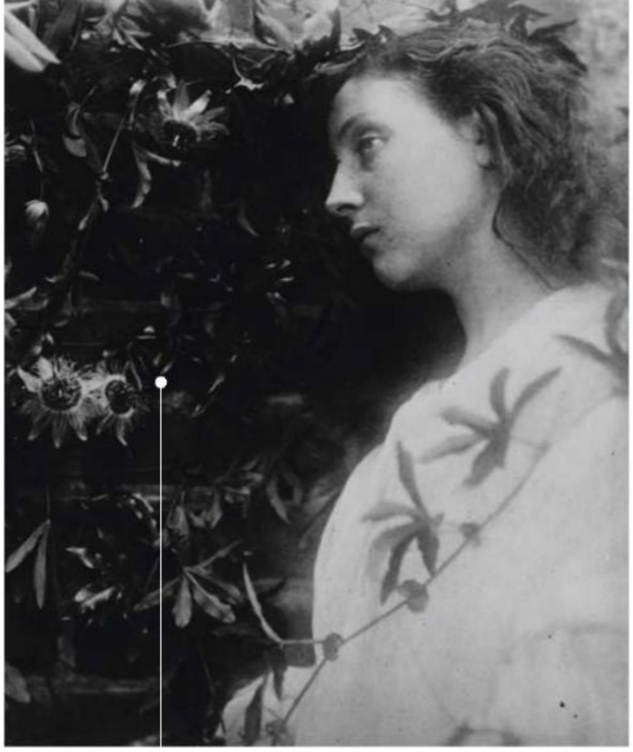
Atkins chose the cyanotype process because it made outstandingly accurate impressions of details, and showed the transparency of the algae – specifically, seaweeds (collecting seaweed specimens was popular in the 19th century). She wrote: 'The difficulty of making accurate drawings of objects as minute as many of the *Algae*... induced me to avail myself of Sir John Herschel's beautiful process of Cyanotype, to obtain impressions of the plants themselves, which I have much pleasure in offering to my botanical friends.'

Cyanotype was a non-silver mixture of ammonium citrate and potassium ferricyanide, brushed on to ordinary paper under dim light, then dried. The flat, dried plant was sandwiched between glass and the coated paper and brought outside for exposure to the sun. The exposed paper was then taken inside and washed in water to bring out its Prussian blue colour and make it permanent.

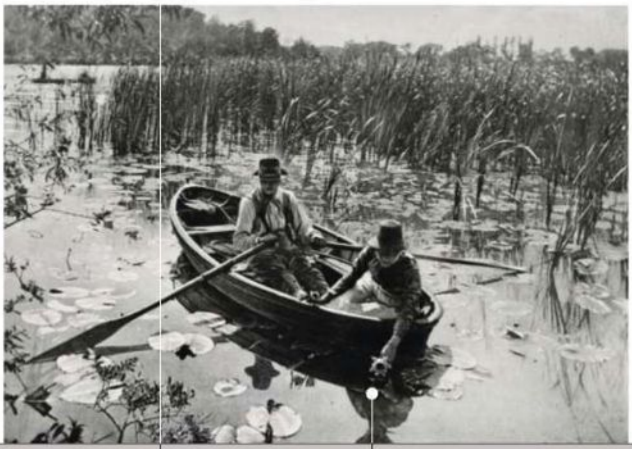
Atkins' second cyanotype book, of ferns, engaged another popular botanical theme of the era. Her publications were timely, as interest in botany was high ▷



Julia Margaret Cameron often photographed her subjects with flowers, each of which was imbued with symbolism. Roses carried multiple meanings, but in general signified oblivion or imagination.



Maud, 1875. Cameron's portraits for *Idylls of the King* by the Poet Laureate Alfred Lord Tennyson were designed to look like contemporary oil paintings.



Gathering Water-Lilies, 1886, by Peter Emerson (1856-1936), who excelled at naturalistic shots of the Norfolk countryside.

> *Talbot, Atkins and Cameron were all great pioneers of photography, and were all enthusiastic about the horticultural trends and botanical discoveries of their time*

▷ among the public: horticulture periodicals were popular and other innovations were attracting interest, such as Wardian cases – sealed glass boxes for collecting and cultivating new, exotic plants.

The accidental photographer

In 1863, Julia Margaret Cameron's daughter presented her with her first camera. Cameron, then aged 48, soon made a photo studio and darkroom in her home, and went on to become famous for her soulful portraits of family, friends and luminaries. Her subjects included poet and playwright Robert Browning, scientist Charles Darwin and actress Ellen Terry. Sometimes they were posed with legendary themes, and often in the garden.

Like Talbot and Atkins, Cameron experimented with photograms of botanical subjects. The portrait of Kate Dore (page 77, far right), a collaboration with fellow photographic pioneer Oscar Gustave Rejlander, features a border decorated with photograms of ferns. Using Rejlander's glass plate negative, Cameron placed ferns on the glass during exposure of the light-sensitive albumen paper.

Dimbola, Cameron's home on the Isle of Wight, is within walking distance of the lush downs and dramatic sea cliffs of Freshwater Bay. In Cameron's day ivy, climbing roses and honeysuckle grew on the house walls, with ornamental and kitchen gardens in the back. She planted roses and primroses in front for passersby to pick. Her home smelled of photo chemicals and sweet briar, according to her grandniece Virginia Woolf.

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John Cimon Warburg (1867-1931) was a pioneer of colour photography known for his portraits of children, such as *Peggy in the Garden* (1909).

American artist Amanda Means (b. 1945) uses leaves as photographic negatives, making prints without using a camera.

From *Hackney Flowers*, 2007. British artist Stephen Gill (b. 1971) creates multi-layered images using plants collected near his home in East London.

Rachel Warne's images of plants on a lightbox won the International Garden Photographer of the Year Portfolio award in 2009.

Cameron's appreciation of flowers and their Victorian symbolism is evident in her photographs, which included ivy (representing fidelity), sunflowers (adoration), camellias (graciousness) and magnolias (dignity). Lily-of-the-valley, laurel, daisy, morning glory, magnolia, grapevine and wheat also feature.

In 1868 she photographed Joseph Hooker, director of the Royal Botanic Gardens (and son of his predecessor, Talbot's friend William Hooker). Working with the labour-intensive wet-plate collodion process, her subjects endured long exposures of several minutes.

The Poet Laureate, Alfred Lord Tennyson, was Cameron's neighbour and friend. His wife Emily helped Mrs Cameron to landscape the gardens when she bought the house in 1860, according to Dimbola's director Brian Hinton. In 1874 Cameron created ornate tableaux, many set in the garden, to illustrate Tennyson's book *Idylls of the King*. Informed by Rembrandt and the Pre-Raphaelites, Cameron broke from the traditional portrait and revealed a more intimate, approachable image of her subject.

A long-term affinity?

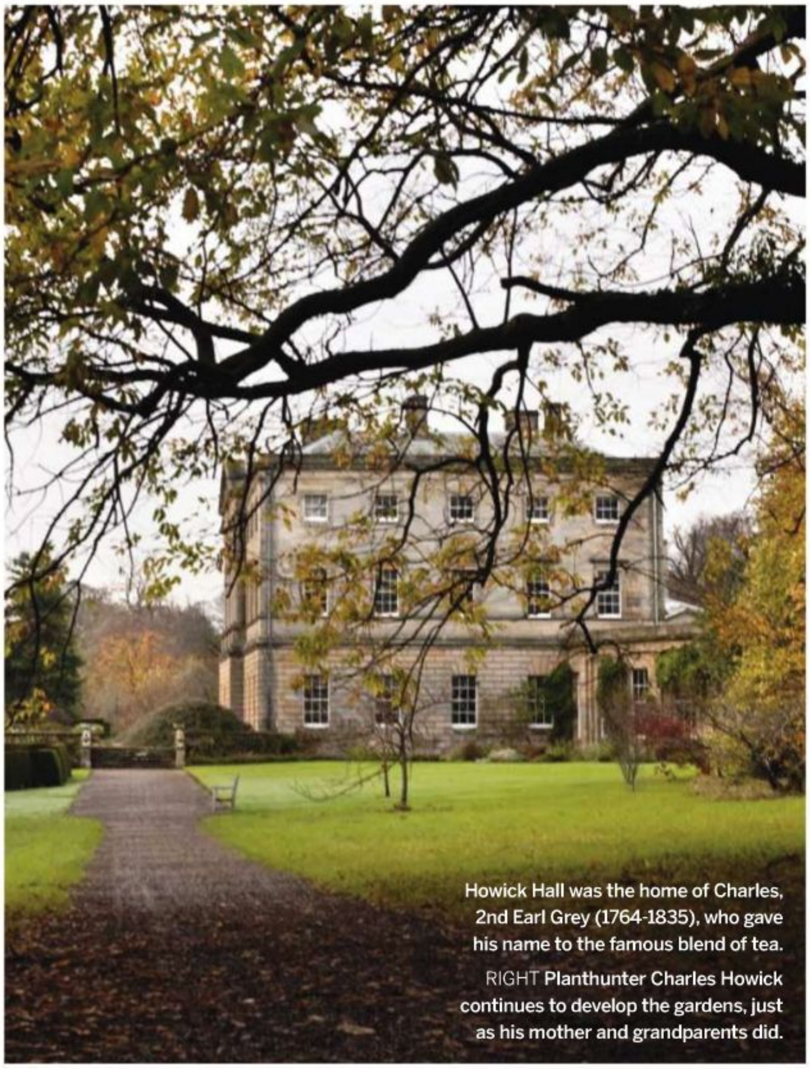
Talbot, Atkins and Cameron were all great pioneers of photography, and were all enthusiastic about the horticultural trends and botanical discoveries of their time. As a result, the garden figured prominently in early photography's most original works.

The garden remained an important subject for photography into the Pictorialist Movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Even today this influence continues in the work of modern photographers such as Amanda Means, Stephen Gill and Rachel Warne. Perhaps the bold simplicity of plant forms, and the peaceful atmosphere of the garden, mean that photographers will never abandon this favourite subject of the pioneers. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

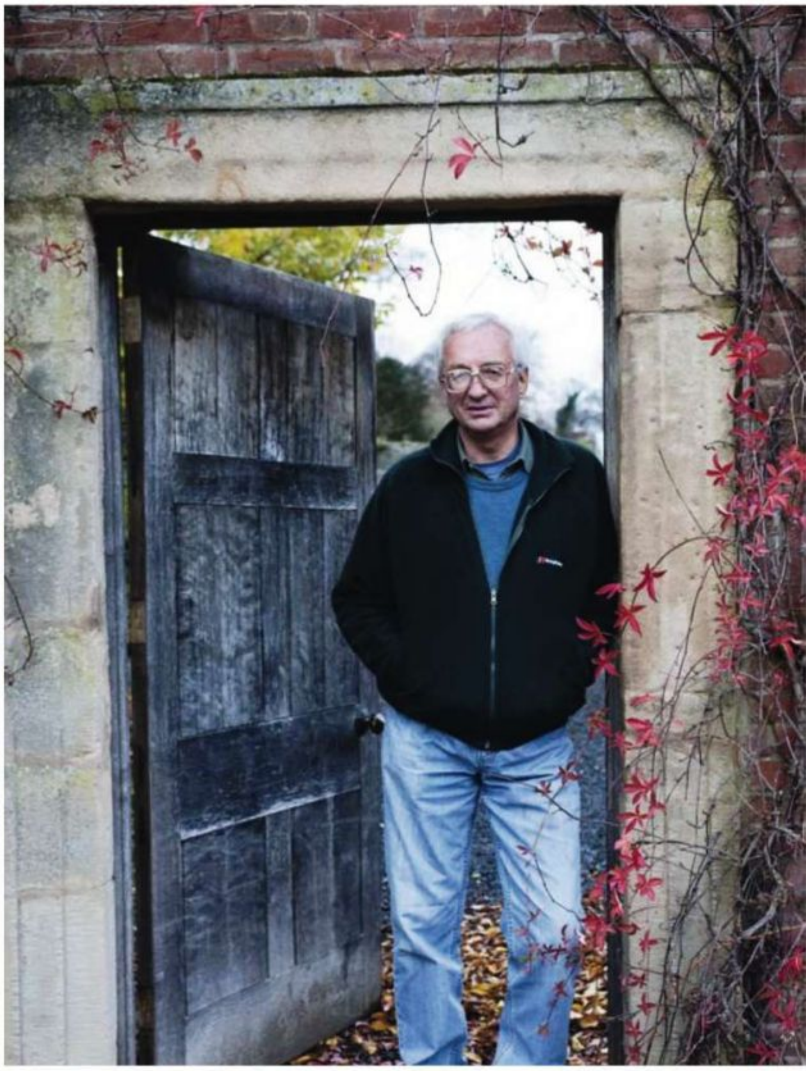
VISIT Henry Fox Talbot Museum
ADDRESS Lacock Abbey, near Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 2LG. TEL 01249 730459
WEBSITE www.nationaltrust.org.uk

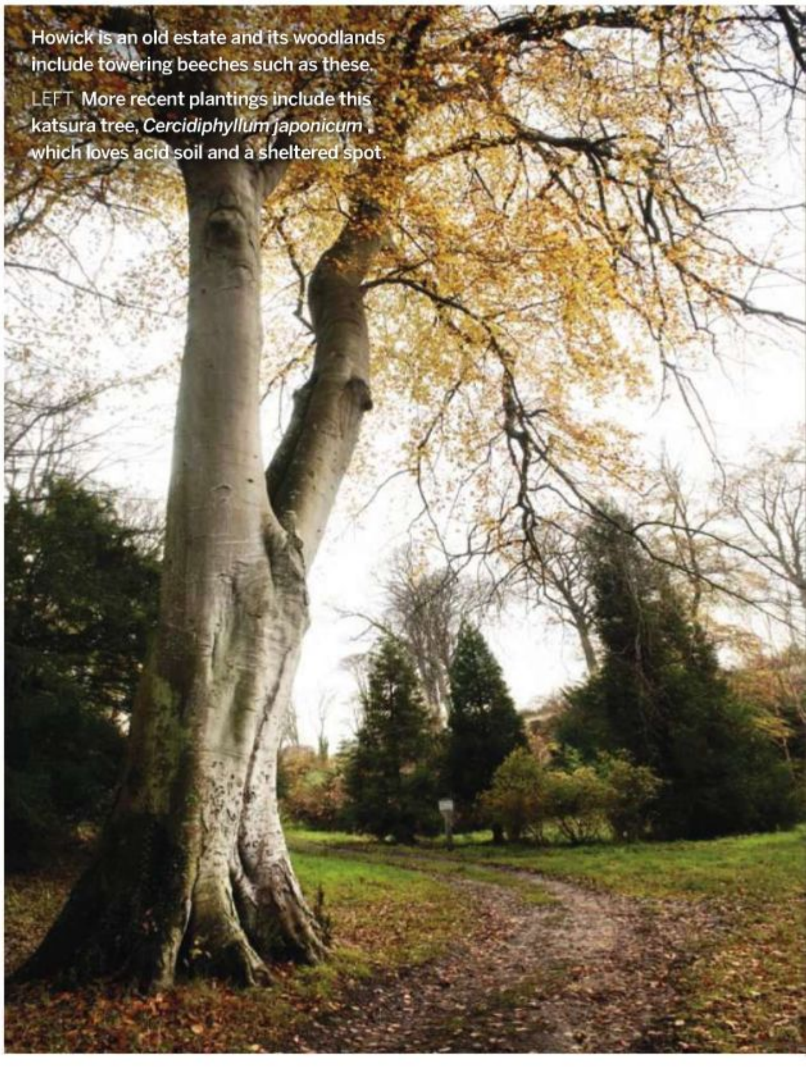
VISIT The Julia Margaret Cameron Trust
ADDRESS Dimbola Lodge Museum, Terrace Lane, Freshwater Bay, Isle of Wight
TEL 01983 756814
WEBSITE www.dimbola.co.uk



Howick Hall was the home of Charles, 2nd Earl Grey (1764-1835), who gave his name to the famous blend of tea.

RIGHT **Planthunter Charles Howick continues to develop the gardens, just as his mother and grandparents did.**





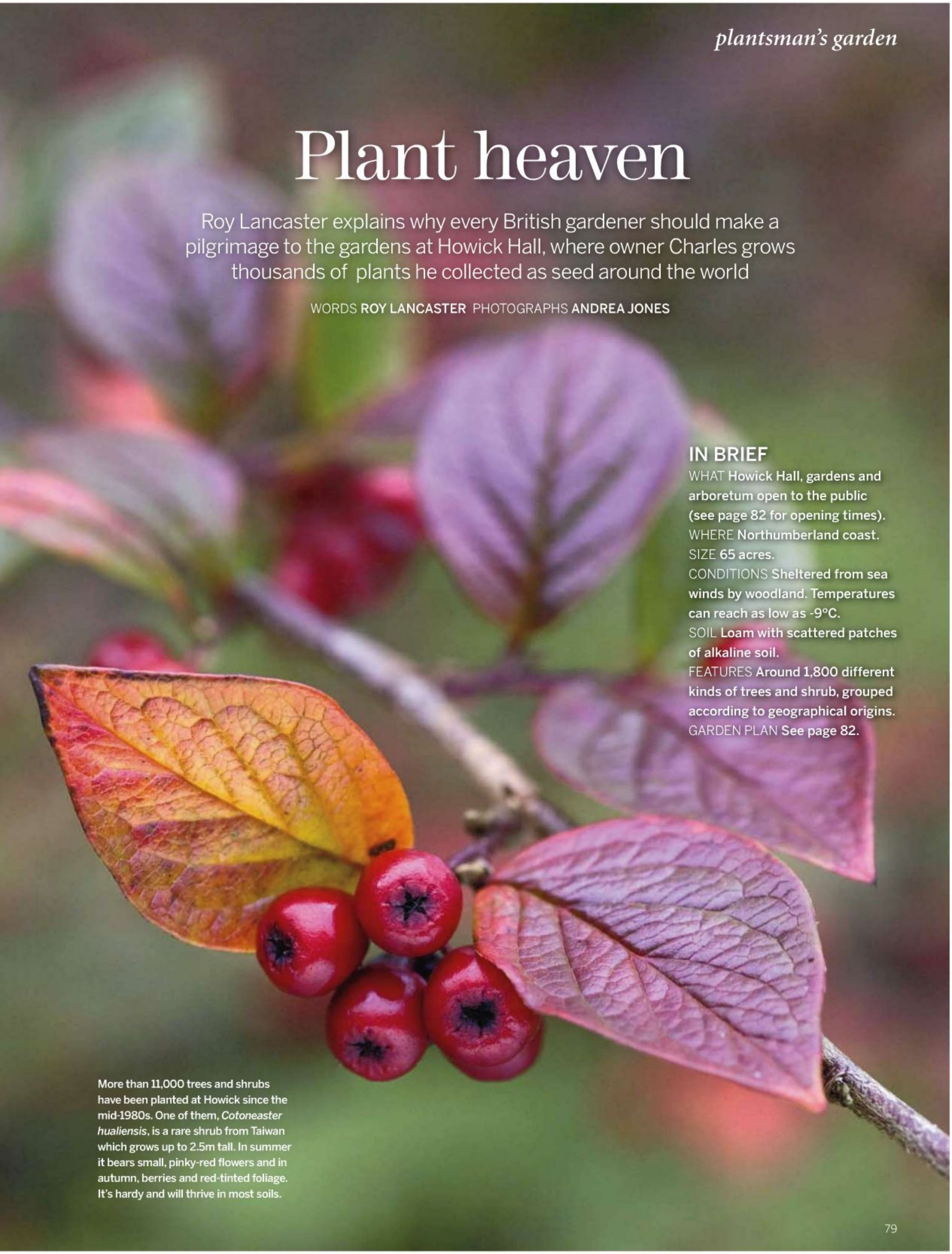
Howick is an old estate and its woodlands include towering beeches such as these.

LEFT **More recent plantings include this katsura tree, *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*, which loves acid soil and a sheltered spot.**

Plant heaven

Roy Lancaster explains why every British gardener should make a pilgrimage to the gardens at Howick Hall, where owner Charles grows thousands of plants he collected as seed around the world

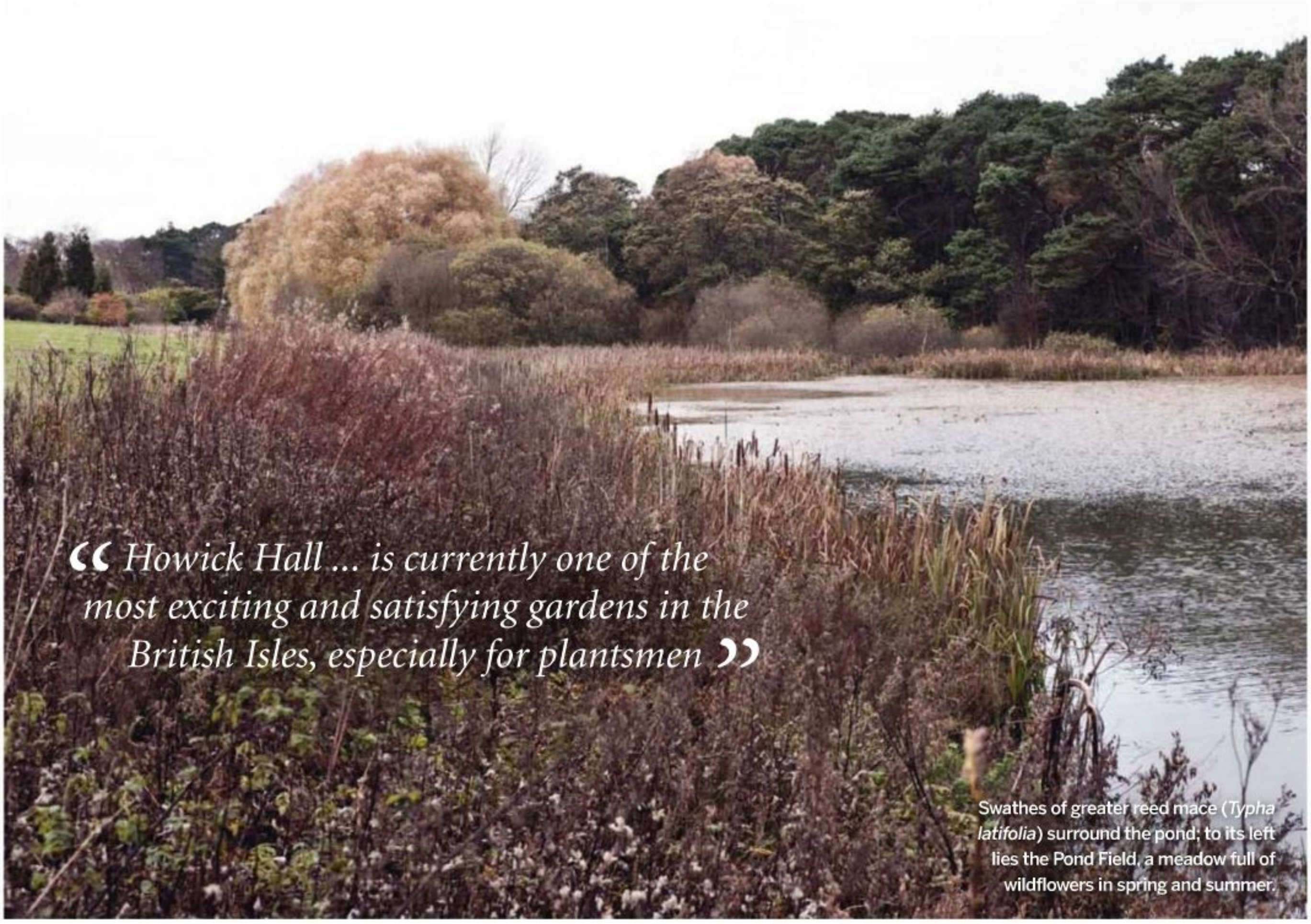
WORDS **ROY LANCASTER** PHOTOGRAPHS **ANDREA JONES**



More than 11,000 trees and shrubs have been planted at Howick since the mid-1980s. One of them, *Cotoneaster hualiensis*, is a rare shrub from Taiwan which grows up to 2.5m tall. In summer it bears small, pinky-red flowers and in autumn, berries and red-tinted foliage. It's hardy and will thrive in most soils.

IN BRIEF

WHAT **Howick Hall, gardens and arboretum open to the public (see page 82 for opening times).**
WHERE **Northumberland coast.**
SIZE **65 acres.**
CONDITIONS **Sheltered from sea winds by woodland. Temperatures can reach as low as -9°C.**
SOIL **Loam with scattered patches of alkaline soil.**
FEATURES **Around 1,800 different kinds of trees and shrub, grouped according to geographical origins.**
GARDEN PLAN **See page 82.**



“Howick Hall … is currently one of the most exciting and satisfying gardens in the British Isles, especially for plantsmen”

Swathes of greater reed mace (*Typha latifolia*) surround the pond; to its left lies the Pond Field, a meadow full of wildflowers in spring and summer.

My first experience of the wild Northumbrian coast was in the 1950s when, as a keen bird watcher, I travelled from my Lancashire home to see the ornithological delights of the Farne Islands, stopping off to view the cliff-top ruins of Dunstanburgh Castle and sample the legendary kippers at nearby Craster. Had I only known it, I was within walking distance of Howick Hall, original home of the now famous Earl Grey Tea. Sadly, I passed it by and it was many years before I had the opportunity to visit, by invitation, both house and garden.

One of the most invigorating experiences of that visit was to follow a path known as the Long Walk alongside the Howick Burn. It led me down through and beyond the garden to the seaweed-strewn shores of the North Sea (pictured overleaf), where I was greeted by the sight of oyster catchers, eider ducks and sundry other sea birds. It was a startling transition from wooded shade to the open beach and one I shall never forget.

More recent visits to Howick Hall Gardens have cemented my belief that it is currently one of the most exciting and satisfying gardens in the British Isles, especially for plantsmen. Natural surroundings apart, the fact that it comprises not one but several gardens and planted areas adds enormously to a visit that ideally demands the best part of a day to do it justice.

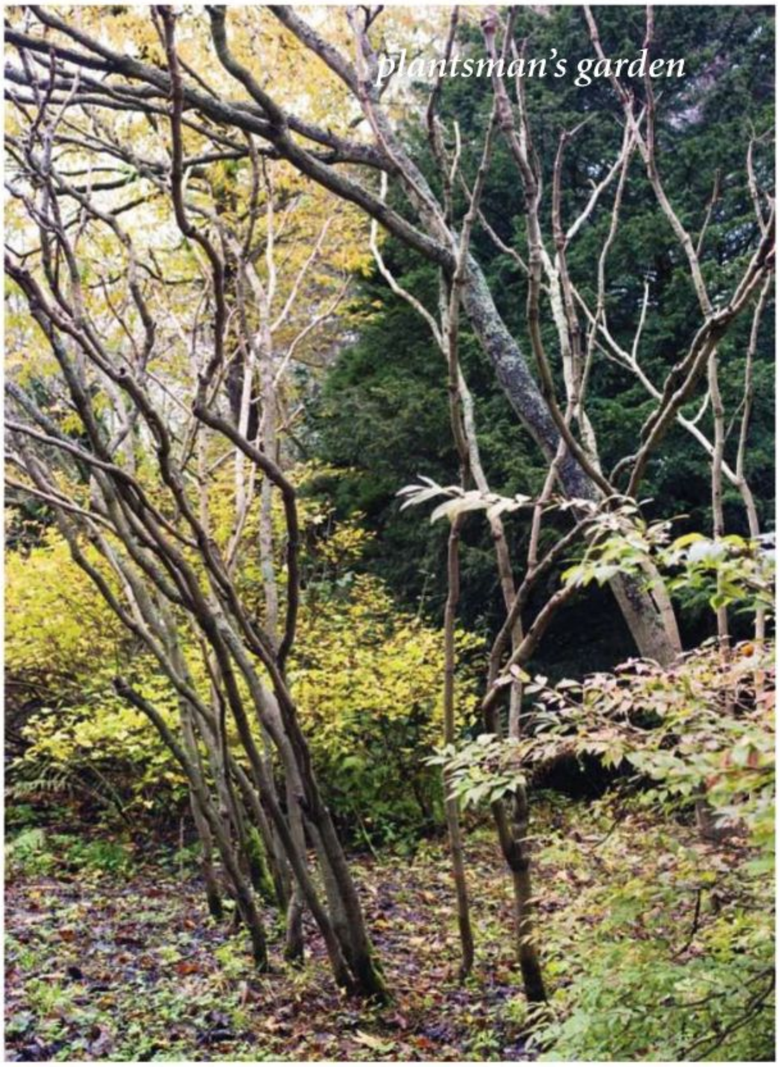
Exploring the gardens

To the east of the house is Silverwood, a delightful woodland garden begun in 1930 by Charles, 5th Earl Grey, and his wife Mabel to celebrate their silver wedding anniversary. Their daughter Lady Mary Howick – mother of the present owner, Charles Howick – continued their work until 2001. Here, via winding footpaths, you can admire in spring and early summer a wealth of flowering and large-leaved rhododendrons, azaleas, *Pieris*, camellias and other choice trees and shrubs. When frosts do not intervene, these include a huge pink-flowered *Magnolia campbellii*. All these trees grow toe-deep in perennial plantings including ferns, hellebores, trilliums, *Meconopsis* and primulas. Here, too, can be seen a splendid clump of the South American bamboo *Chusquea culeou*.

Further perennial plantings can be found in the summer borders and rock garden south of the house. To the north is the bog garden, with an iris-fringed pool where a range of interesting and ornamental perennials flourish, many collected as seed in the wilds of China and other far-flung corners of the globe by Charles Howick. These include the striking Chinese ornamental rhubarb *Rheum alexandrae*. Charles' activities and achievements in the last 30 years as a modern-day plant explorer have brought a renaissance to the garden, principally in the huge numbers of woody plants – trees, shrubs and climbers – he has planted in the woodlands and glades. Here, stately veteran beeches still dominate; but the newer plantings are even more evident in those areas either side of the Howick Burn now known as the West and East Arboretums, together with neighbouring areas such as Rye Hill and the Pond Field (pictured above), which also features a wildflower meadow. All areas have been provided with paths or are otherwise easily accessible, giving visitors excellent opportunities to admire the rich collections, most of which are labelled.

According to the impressive and instructive guide to the arboretum, 99 per cent of the trees and shrubs here have been grown from seed collected by Charles ▷

The rich autumn colour of *Viburnum kansuense* is preceded in June and July by pink-flushed white flowers. This shrub grows up to 3m tall and prefers acid soil in part shade.



RIGHT In summer these slender *Aralia* stems bear large exotic-looking leaves.

Chinese firethorn *Pyracantha fortuneana* bears masses of small white flowers in spring, followed by berries that last all winter.

LEFT The foliage of Europe's only deciduous conifer, the common larch (*Larix decidua*), turns gold in autumn.

A mile-and-a-half walk through the woodlands along Howick Burn leads to the beach.

▷ and others in the temperate regions of the world, primarily in Asia (Himalaya, China, Japan), North and South America, Europe, Tasmania and New Zealand.

It is from his own collections, however, that Charles Howick has gained the most satisfaction. The benefits of his having seen trees growing naturally in the wild can be admired in the groves of white and coppery-red stemmed birch (*Betula*), red and white fruited rowans (*Sorbus*), autumn-tinted maples (*Acer*) and the informal groupings of *Rhododendron*, *Viburnum*, *Euonymus*, *Cornus* and other choice trees and shrubs, all skilfully integrated. These plantings are shaping and beautifying the garden landscape of Howick Hall in a way that Charles's grandparents might never have imagined, but surely would have approved. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

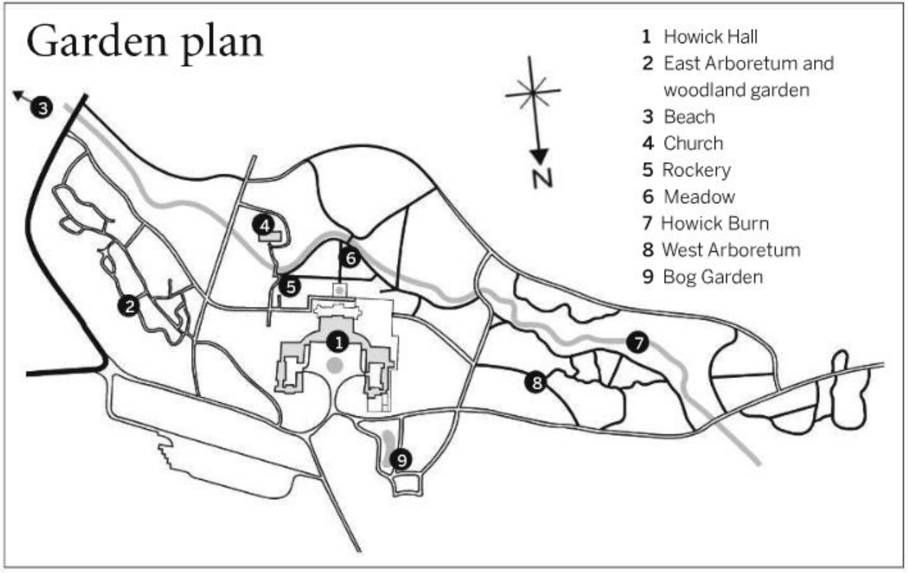
ADDRESS Howick Hall Gardens and Arboretum, near Alnwick, Northumberland NE66 3LB.

TEL 01665 577285

WEBSITE www.howickhallgardens.org

OPEN until 14 November, Tuesday to Sunday, 10.30am-4pm. The garden reopens in February. Summer hours 12-6pm, daily.

Roy Lancaster is a plantsman, planthunter and writer who regularly appears on BBC radio and TV.



Garden plan

Autumn stems and fruits at Howick

Roy Lancaster chooses nine seasonal stars growing at Howick Hall

1 *Eleutherococcus leucorrhizus* var. *setchuenensis*
A deciduous Chinese shrub of the ivy family, which bears large clusters of fruits from the branch tips. It's hardy and thrives in any soil. Up to 3m tall.

2 *Acer davidii*
The new stems of the snakebark maple are purple, fading to striped green. Lush green leaves turn red in autumn. It will thrive in a sheltered spot away from freezing winds, growing up to 15m tall.

3 *Sorbus koehneana*
A beautiful large shrub or small, multi-stemmed tree up to 5m tall. In autumn its slender branches are strung with berries. Hardy; prefers moist, acidic soil.

4 *Rosa setipoda*
Its fierce thorns are especially apparent from autumn to the end of the winter. Up to 3m tall, with flagon-shaped, red hips in autumn. Hardy; most soils.

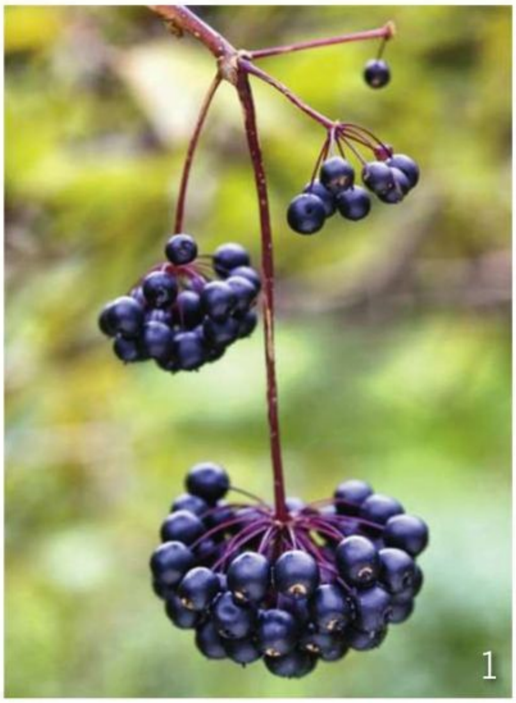
5 *Malus prattii*
This strong-growing Chinese crab apple grows up to 10m tall. In autumn its large leaves sometimes colour richly, and it bears small fruits. Hardy; most soils.

6 *Juglans mandshurica*
The pale bark of this Chinese walnut is attractive in autumn and winter, when the bold, pinnate leaves of summer are but a memory. Hardy; any soil.

7 *Ilex fargesii*
This evergreen holly grows up to 7m tall and has year-round attractive leaves and small flowers in spring. Best given shelter and acidic soil.

8 *Decaisnea fargesii*
Multi-stemmed, deciduous shrub to 3m tall with handsome foliage and green flowers in loose sprays, followed by striking blue fruits. Hardy; most soils.

9 *Berberis pruinosa*
Strong-growing, evergreen shrub 2m or more tall. It has a dense, spiny habit, rich green foliage and clusters of blue berries in autumn. Hardy; most soils.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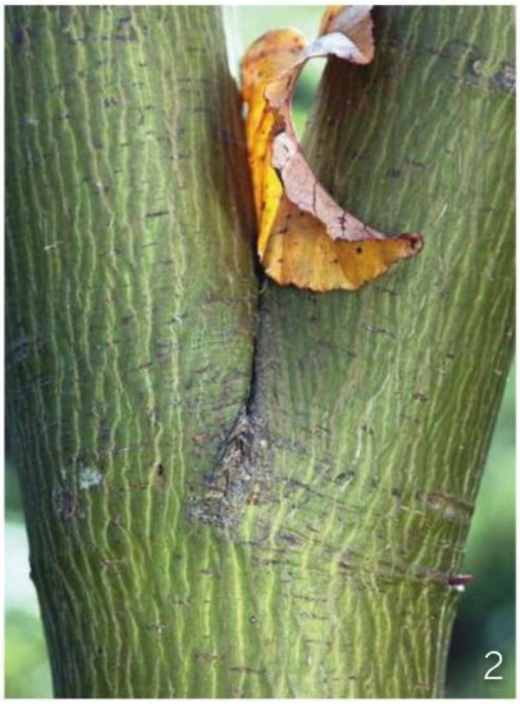
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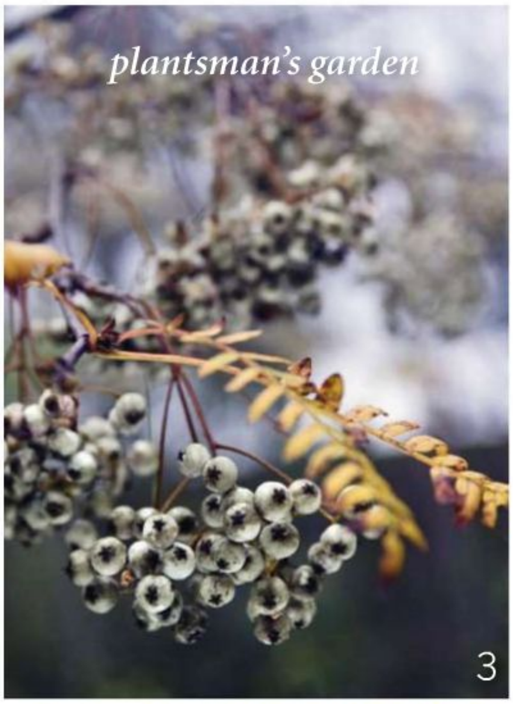
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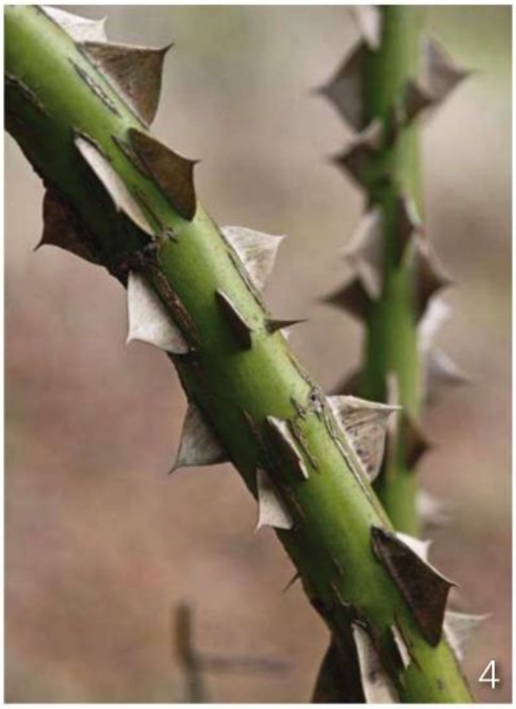
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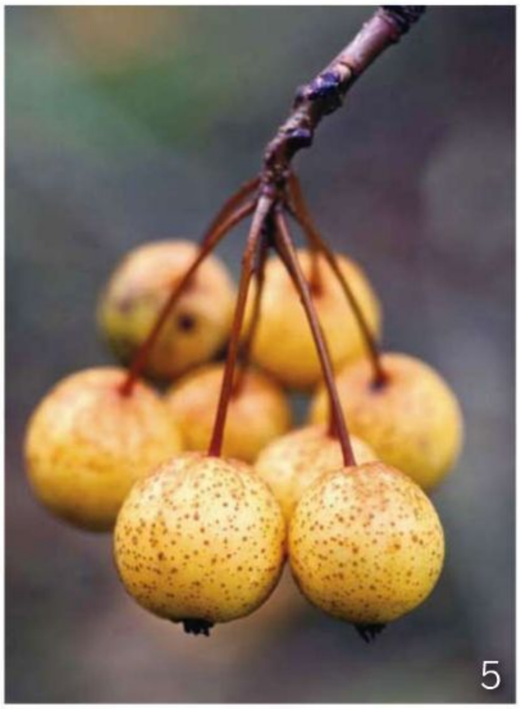
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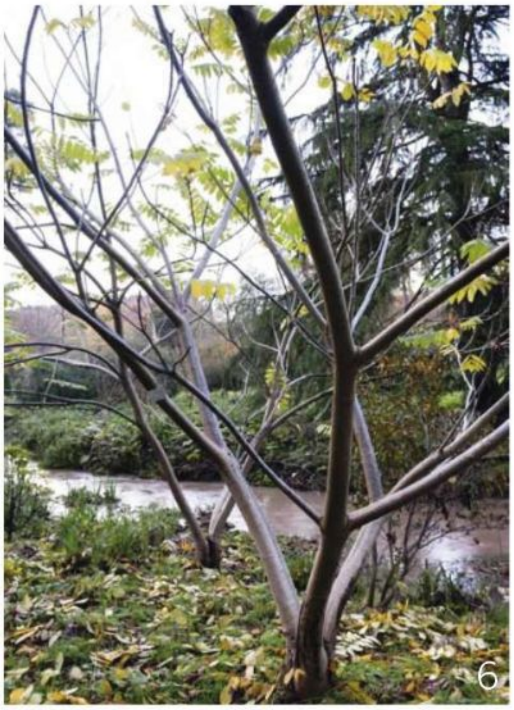
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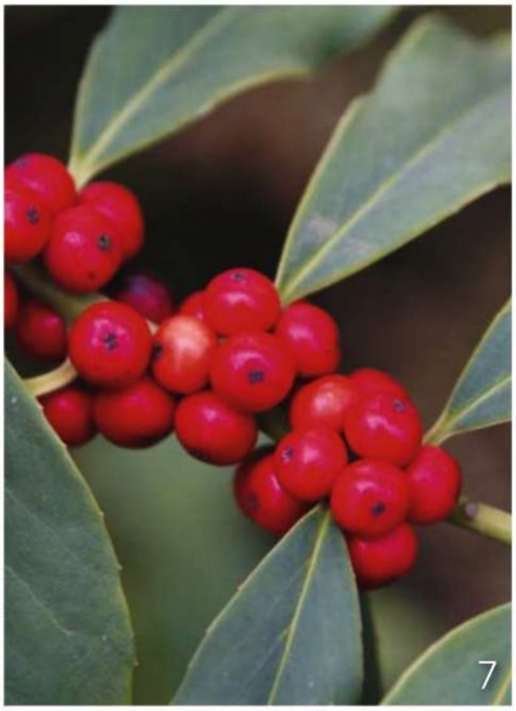
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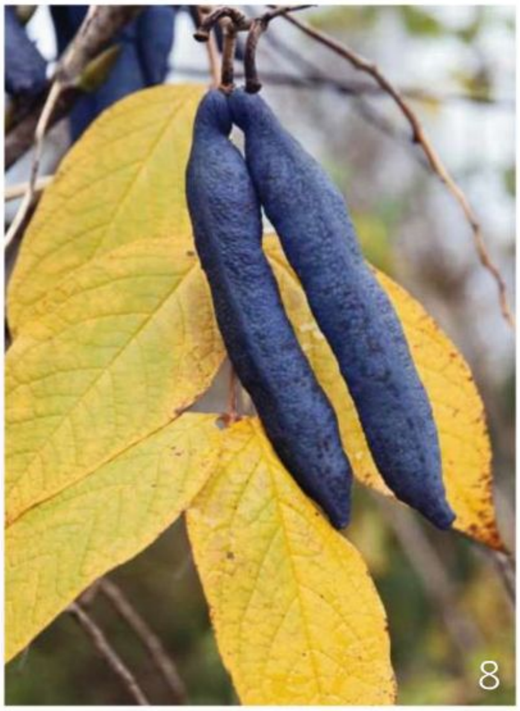
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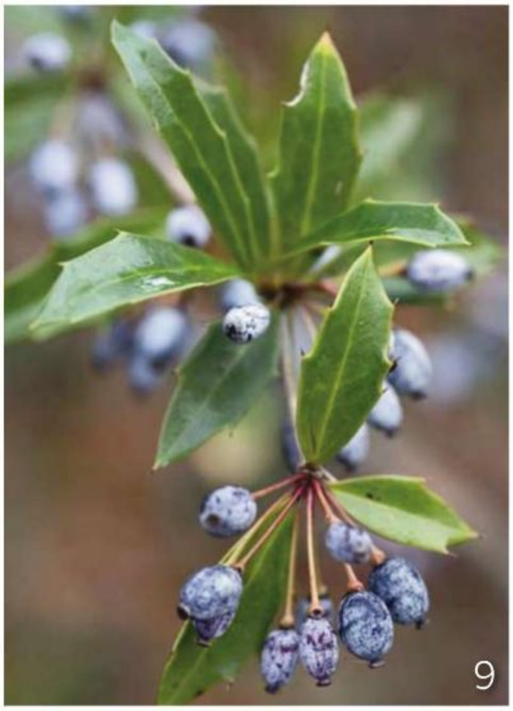
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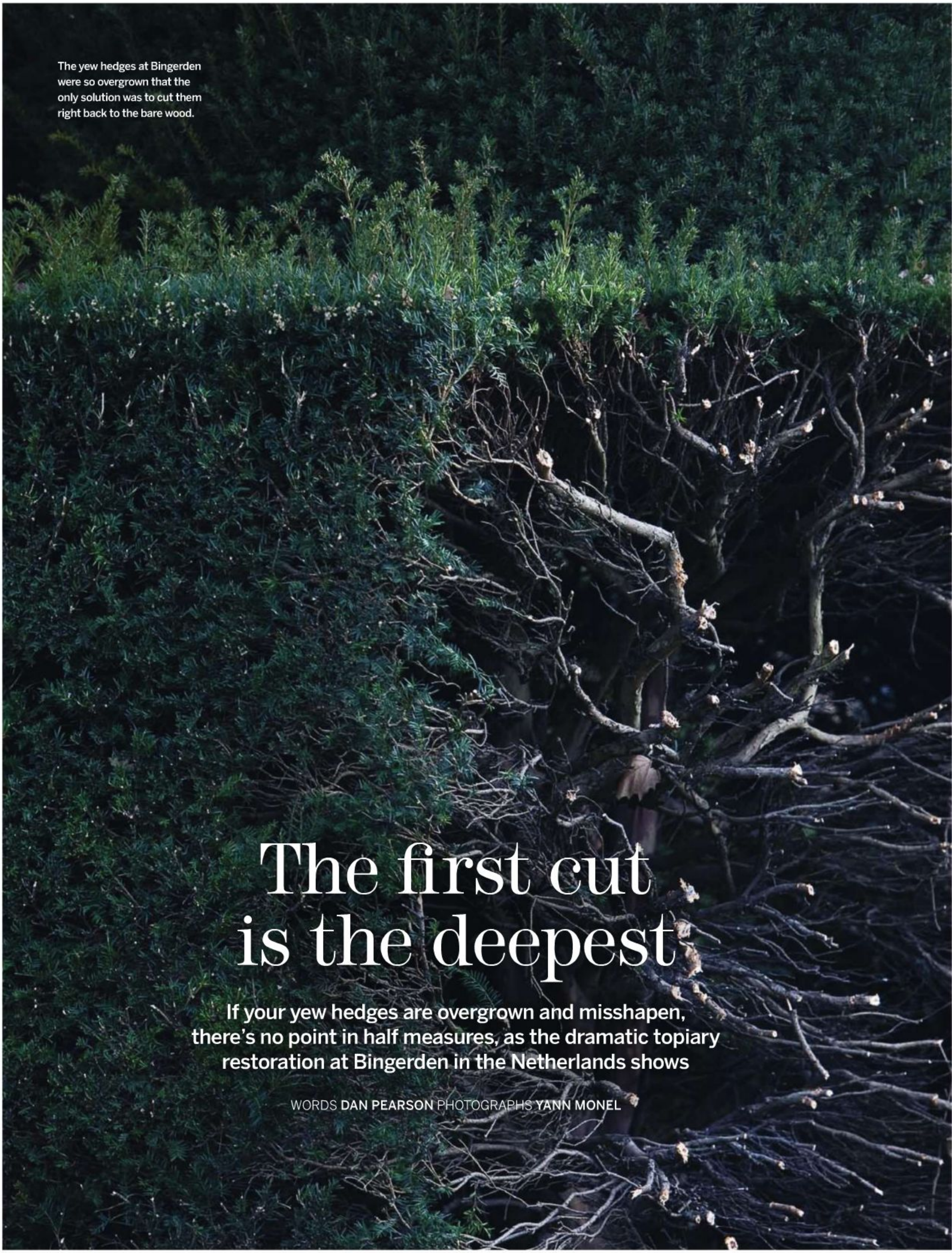
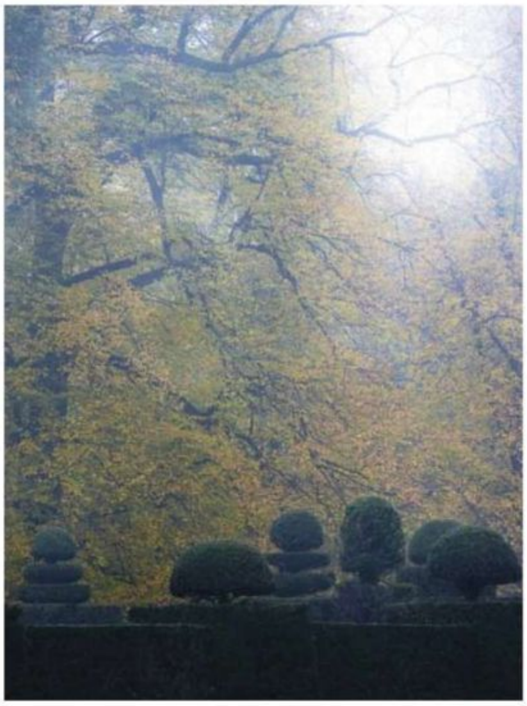


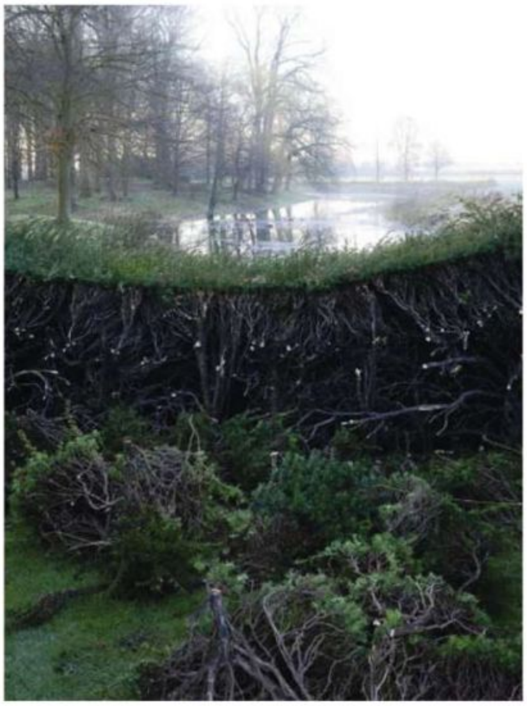
The yew hedges at Bingerden were so overgrown that the only solution was to cut them right back to the bare wood.

The first cut is the deepest

If your yew hedges are overgrown and misshapen, there's no point in half measures, as the dramatic topiary restoration at Bingerden in the Netherlands shows

WORDS **DAN PEARSON** PHOTOGRAPHS **YANN MONEL**





ABOVE The hedges enclose gardens either side of the house; these clipped yew domes are known as The Monks.

TOP RIGHT Topiary specialist Dirk Aneca uses a petrol-driven hedge trimmer to shape the hedges and topiary.

BOTTOM RIGHT One side of the yew hedge is pruned drastically, then given a couple of years to recover before the other side gets the same treatment.

The topiary at the Bingerden estate was planted 200 years ago, and has lived through a shifting climate and several generations of gardeners. During the war, the monks that lived at Bingerden tended them and they even remained unscarred when the original house was burned to the ground by the German army in 1945. They have lived a charmed life, surviving the lean years before the current owner's mother restored the garden in the early 1980s. But in 2009, their current custodian, Constance van Weede, gave them the most drastic treatment of their lives.

Constance explains that originally the forms of the topiary were more complex. Over time they had become simplified and out of shape. For 25 years before 2009, the budget for the garden allowed only one cut a year and the topiary suffered. It had been cut but not shaped; the branches were heavy and there was no line or rhythm. Constance knew she would have to try to reinvigorate the topiary. She made a well-judged decision in contacting the International Topiary Society, who recommended topiary specialist Dirk Aneca. "He had the eye," Constance explained, "but when we finally cut the bushes back it still felt like a poker game. I wasn't sure they would survive their wounds. They were brown and leafless for nearly eight months. We talked to them every day like they were humans, until at last they regenerated."

To restore yew hedges, the limbs on one side are cut right back to the trunk. After two years those on the other side are cut back too. At Bingerden, Dirk reshaped the branches of the topiary ▷

Growing healthy yew topiary

A well-lit position and a rich, free-draining soil provide the best growing conditions for yew, although it will tolerate shade. In ideal conditions, yew grows faster than you might think, between 30cm and 60cm a year.

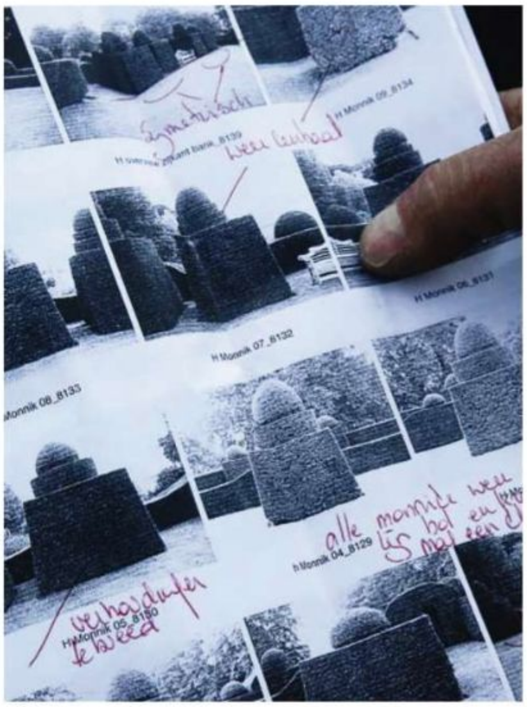
In poorly drained soil, yew is prone to *Phytophthora* (fungus) and its foliage turns orange in winter if stressed by waterlogging.

When topiary grows out of shape, it will slump due to the weight of growth. This is when drastic action is needed. It will regenerate most successfully if it is healthy and well looked after. If the trees look weak, prepare your plants with feed and mulch at least a year before any drastic pruning.

Always prune with sharp tools appropriate for the weight of wood you are cutting. Make a clean cut so that wounds heal rapidly.

After pruning, feed with a balanced NPK fertiliser (nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium). Mulch the root plate and water well in the first growing season.

To avoid drastic action, cut with shears in spring and late summer to keep lines sharp. Reduce new growth as close as possible to the original form while not cutting into old wood.



ABOVE Dirk uses these old photographs to restore the topiary as faithfully as possible.

TOP RIGHT The dense foliage of restored hedges and topiary is clipped twice a year.

RIGHT Dirk with Constance van Weede, who says she was so worried about the pruned plants that she spoke to them daily until they recovered.

▷ to the original outline. He used petrol-driven hedge trimmers to cut into the old wood and establish the shape. The fine work and thinning of dead and crossing wood, to allow the air into the branches, was done by hand. Pruning was carried out in March as the sap was beginning to move, so the trees had a whole growing season ahead of them to regenerate.

The trees were given a balanced NPK feed (nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium), spread evenly over the root plate. They were then manured, once in the spring and again in the autumn. After thorough and regular watering during that first growing season, within a year they are green again. It will take another two years for the forms to fill out.

Constance explains that to avoid having to take such drastic measures again in the future, they will be trimmed twice, not just once a year. A spring cut followed by a late-summer trim to sharpen the lines should keep them as they were intended. I suspect that, given the love and care that has been lavished upon them, Constance will continue to talk them through their rehabilitation. □

• For expert advice on how to design and use hedges in your garden see next month's *Design ideas.*

EVENTS Bingerden opens to the public for its prestigious International Specialist Nursery Days on June 17, 18 and 19, 2011. ADDRESS Huis Bingerden, Bingerdenseweg 21, 6986 CE Angerlo, the Netherlands. TEL +31 313 48 28 24 WEBSITE www.bingerden.com

How to choose plants for topiary

Trees and shrubs with small foliage make the best topiary. Each leaf is less obvious in the mass, which allows the form to be clearer in outline. Regular cutting with shears or hedge clippers will show in a large-leaf plant but not in a small-leaf one.

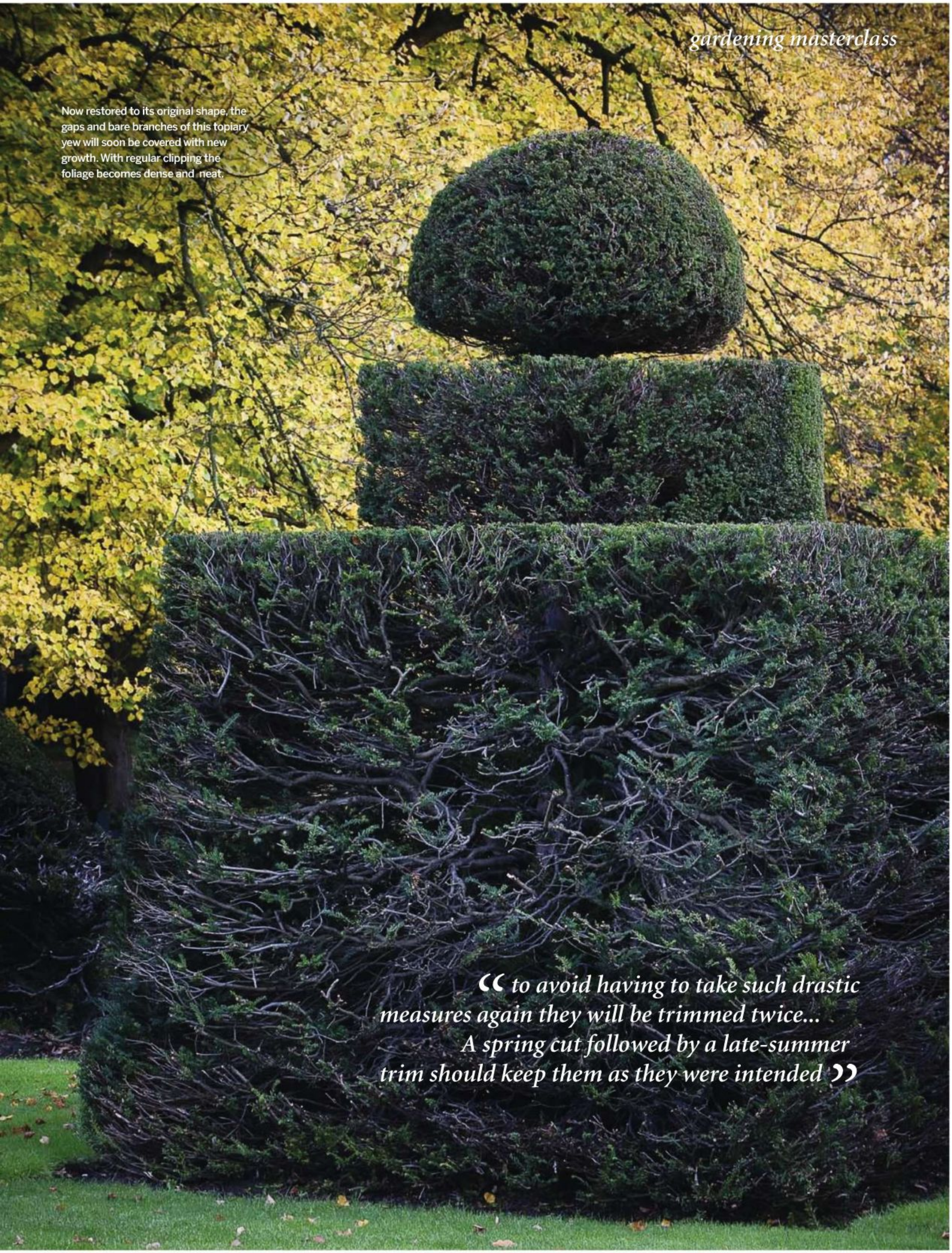
Choose plants that regenerate from regular cutting, and from drastic cutting if required. Beech makes an excellent hedge and a fine-looking topiary plant, but is not ideal because it does not regenerate readily from old wood.

Yew and box are popular for evergreen topiary, but **consider using deciduous plants** such as hornbeam, which retains a sparse layer of brown leaves through which its skeleton is visible until spring.

For fast-growing topiary consider *Lonicera nitida*. It is easy and adaptable but needs three to four cuts a year. Box-leaved holly, *Ilex crenata,* will grow faster than box in hotter summers. Our common holly, *Ilex aquifolium*, will make a robust topiary form.

In a small garden *Ilex* x *meserveae* Blue Prince (='Conablu') makes an ideal evergreen topiary plant.

If you only want to cut once a year in spring, the slower growing forms of *Ilex* and *Osmanthus heterophyllus* or *O.* x *burkwoodii* make good subjects.



Now restored to its original shape, the gaps and bare branches of this topiary yew will soon be covered with new growth. With regular clipping the foliage becomes dense and neat.

> “to avoid having to take such drastic measures again they will be trimmed twice... A spring cut followed by a late-summer trim should keep them as they were intended”

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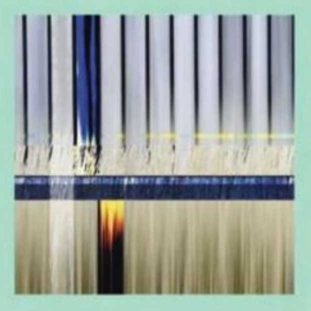

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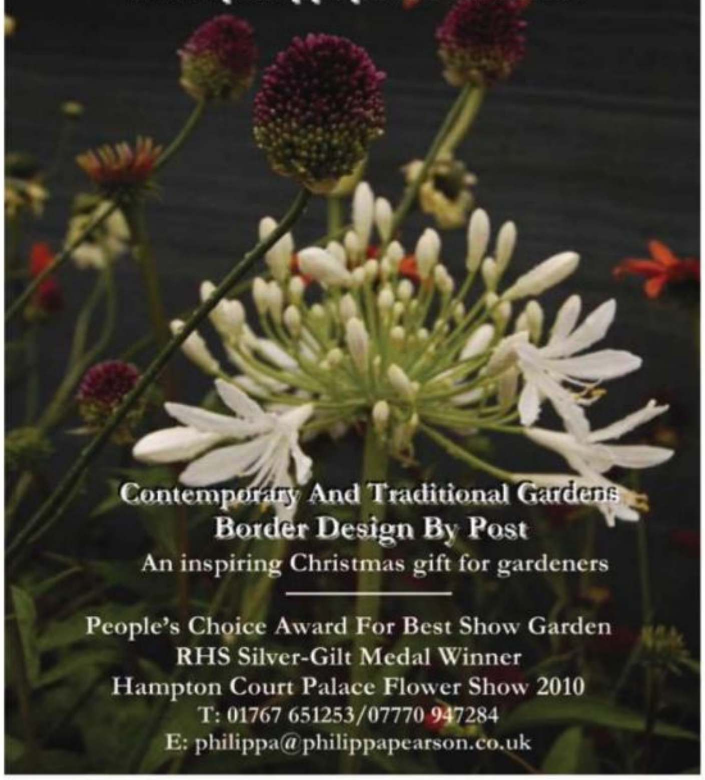

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Design

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Design ideas

Designer Arne Maynard explains how to transform your garden with an enticing entrance – see page 94.

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News

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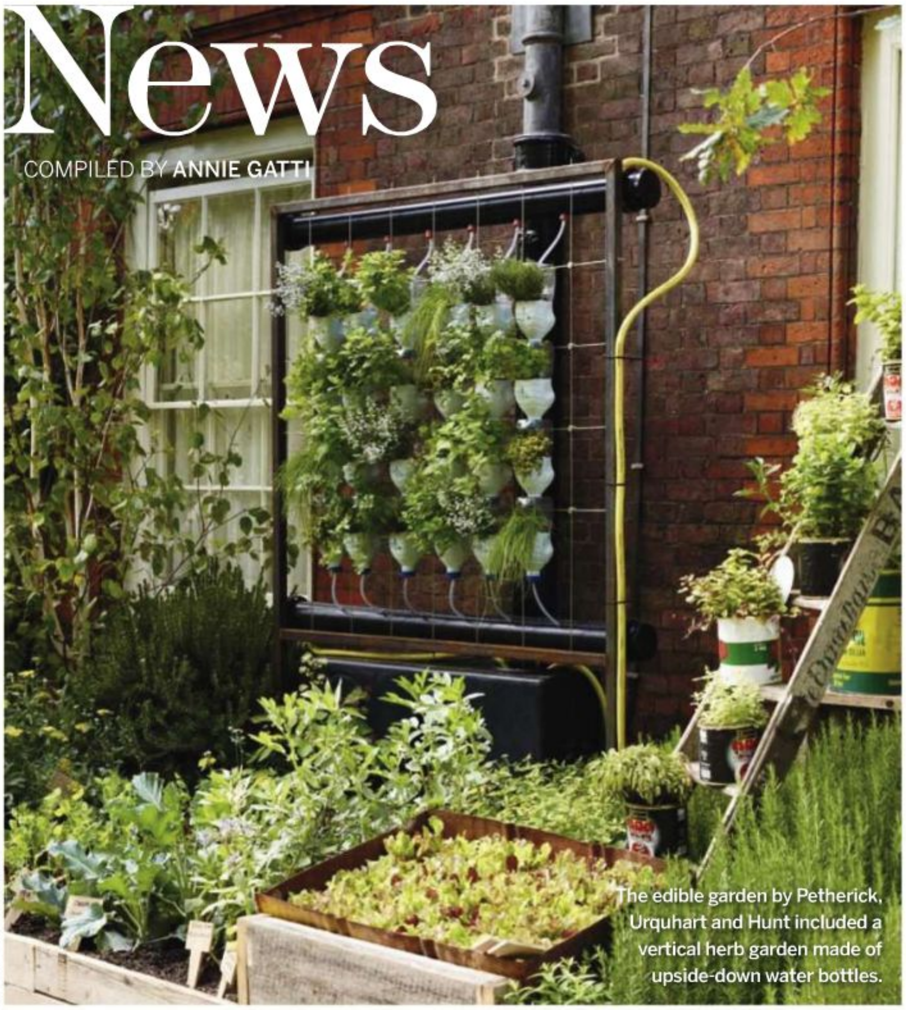


The edible garden by Petherick, Urquhart and Hunt included a vertical herb garden made of upside-down water bottles.

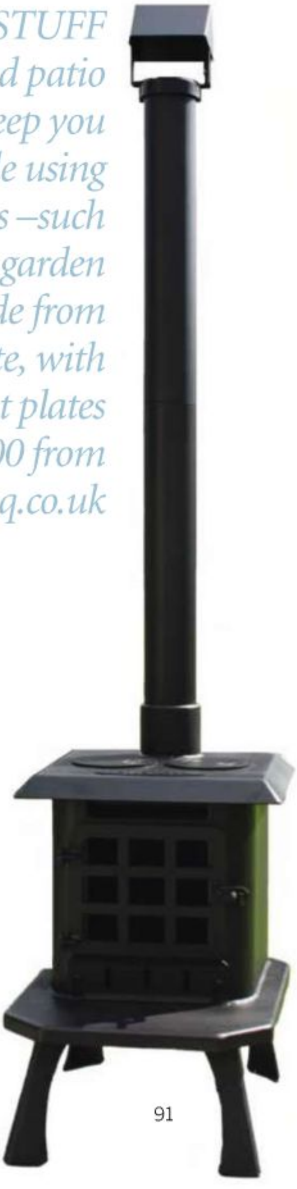
ALLAN POLLOK-MORRIS

DESIGN TALENT

Fresh start for trio

A new design partnership with an emphasis on sustainable gardens and landscapes has been set up by West Country garden and landscape designers Lulu Urquhart and Adam Hunt and biodynamic and organic expert Tom Petherick. "We are seeing that people want to connect with nature on a deeper level," explains Tom "and our new practice is a response to that." The trio's first commission was the Future Cities Garden at the Start Garden Party to Make a Difference at Clarence House, London, in September. This edible garden (left) included French beans scrambling through maize and herbs grown in water bottles on a self-watering frame. Recycled containers and colourful beneficial flowers demonstrated how attractive and productive an edible patch just 1.5m wide can be. www.pethericksurquhartandhunt.com

HOT STUFF A stove-shaped patio heater will keep you warm outside using sustainable fuels – such as wood and dry garden clippings. Made from mild steel plate, with stainless steel hot plates for cooking. £300 from www.friartuckbbq.co.uk



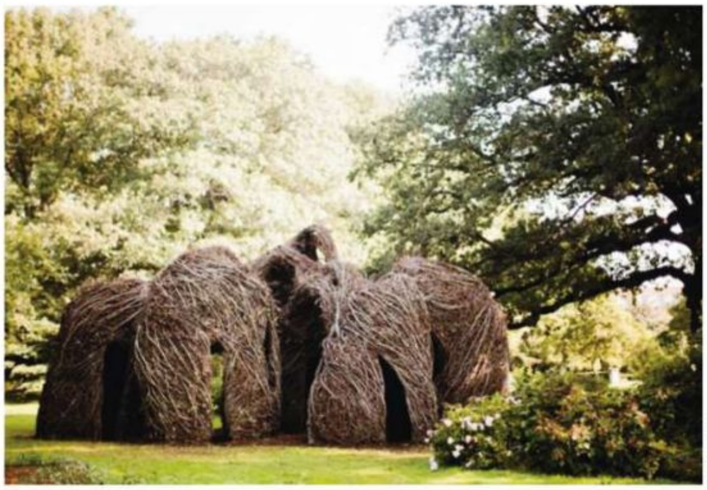
SHOWPIECE SCULPTURE

A double-helix water feature by landscape designer Michael Balston forms the centrepiece of the RHS garden at the Taipei International Flora Expo in Taiwan, which opens this month. The stainless steel piece is set in a circular pool and surrounded by trees and shrubs sourced from Taiwan. www.2010taipeiexpo.tw

GARDEN ART

Woven warren

'Stick' artist Patrick Dougherty has created Brooklyn Botanic Garden's first site-specific sculpture. The grouping of giant hollow shapes, called *Natural History*, is woven from plant stems and provides a warren of shelters to be explored by adults and children. Garden staff helped make the sculpture using willow stems (*Salix atrocinerea*) cut from a park on Staten Island. The work will remain in situ until July 2011.



SARAH TEW

APPOINTMENTS

Tom takes over

The gardens at Gravetye Manor, West Sussex, home of William Robinson for more than 50 years, are undergoing a major restoration. Jeremy Hosking, the new owner of the hotel, has appointed Tom Coward as head gardener. Tom trained at Pershore College and Kew and spent three years at Great Dixter in East Sussex. Tom will continue Robinson's naturalistic approach and is hoping to reinstate some original features, but is also considering new planting: "Robinson was such a progressive man. If he was alive today he'd be experimenting away." The team of six gardeners are tackling the perennial weed problem in the flower garden and long border and have started work on the walled oval kitchen garden, which will have a classical design. The hotel and gardens will close for three months at the beginning of 2011 but the perimeter footpath remains open. To receive the monthly garden newsletter visit www.gravetyemanor.co.uk

COURTESY OF GRAVETYE MANOR

DAVID POULTNEY / GAP PHOTOS

LANDSCAPE PROJECTS

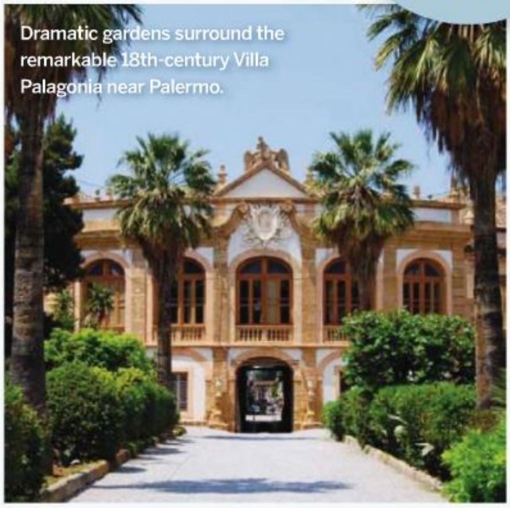
An Olympic effort

Planting has got under way at the 250-acre Olympic Park site in East London, designed by LDA Design + Hargreaves Associates. Once the 2012 games have finished, the site will become the largest new urban park in the UK for more than a century. The first of ten wildflower meadows, selected to be nectar and pollen-rich by James Hitchmough and Nigel Dunnett of Sheffield University and sown late to peak in July and August, produced a blaze of mainly golden blooms from annuals such as *Coreopsis tinctoria*, *Eschscholzia californica*, *Chrysanthemum segetum* hybrids and the South African daisy *Dimorphotheca*. The meadows are being trialled to perfect the required irrigation, late sowing and cutting back, ready for 2012.

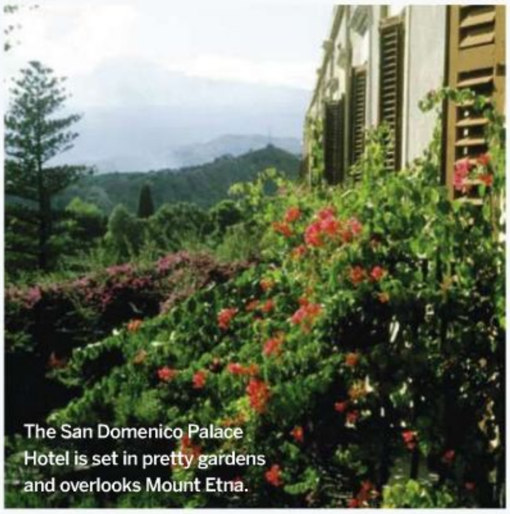
Notebook

- **Learn about two acclaimed garden designers** in events at the Garden Museum, London, this month. On 3 November Sir Roy Strong and biographer Barbara Paul Robinson discuss the work of the late Rosemary Verey and on 17 November Arabella Lennox-Boyd reveals the inspiration behind her own designs. Tel 020 7401 8865, www.gardenmuseum.eventbrite.com
- **The Lupton Trust**, which manages the restoration of the landscaped park and house at Lupton, near Brixham, Devon, has won a grant of £200,000 from English Heritage to help repair the elegant Italian Garden, thought to date from the 1840s.
- **Patrick Blanc** is a keynote speaker at Singapore's Skyrise Greenery Conference (1 November, www.skyrisegreenery.com), which explores trends in rooftop and vertical greening. (See examples of his work at www.murvegetalpatrickblanc.com.)
- **The conservation of fungi** in our gardens and wild landscapes was the subject of a conference at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, this summer. As a result, the International Society for Fungal Conservation has been set up. For more details visit www.fungal-conservation.org. RBGE's multi-media exhibition on fungi continues until 21 November. www.rbge.org.uk

The botanical gardens of Palermo host a remarkable collection of plants in 25 acres of grounds.



Dramatic gardens surround the remarkable 18th-century Villa Palagonia near Palermo.



The San Domenico Palace Hotel is set in pretty gardens and overlooks Mount Etna.

TOP RIGHT: GREG BALFOUR EVANS / ALAMY. OTHERS: PHOTOLIBRARY

GARDENS OF SICILY

Visit the gardens of Catania and Palermo on this exclusive GARDENS ILLUSTRATED tour, from 28 May to 2 June 2011

Sicily's climate and rich soils allow an extraordinary range of plants to grow both in gardens and the landscape beyond them. This is a holiday for plant lovers, who will encounter glorious collections of palms, succulents and an enormous variety of other exotic trees and plants, including those of the Orto Botanico Palermo, which holds one of the most important botanical collections in the world.

Our tour also visits a series of fascinating private gardens set against the deep blue Tyrrhenian Sea, the lava-strewn slopes of Mount Etna and the orange groves of Catania. Everywhere we go you will meet passionate gardeners. In some of the gardens we visit you'll enjoy aperitifs and meals in the exotic surroundings of these baroque palaces and country villas.

HELENA ATTLEE

Your guide is the author of several books about Italian gardens. She lectures widely, writes for a number of magazines and newspapers, and has many year's experience of leading garden tours in Italy.

We will stay in two magnificent hotels: the Villa Igiea, with its opulent Art Nouveau interior, terraced gardens and swimming pool overlooking the Bay of Palermo; and in Taormina, where we will make our home at the superb San Domenico Palace Hotel, a converted 15th-century monastery that combines the beauty of its own splendid gardens with wonderful views across the bay to Mount Etna. ☐

Tour information

The tour price is £2,190 per person and includes accommodation, buffet breakfast, two evening meals and three lunches with local wines included. (If you wish to travel alone, the hotels levy a single supplement of £250 per person.) The tour price includes return flights from London Heathrow with Alitalia. All garden visits are conducted by Helena Attlee, garden writer and expert on Italian gardens. For more information or to book, please contact:

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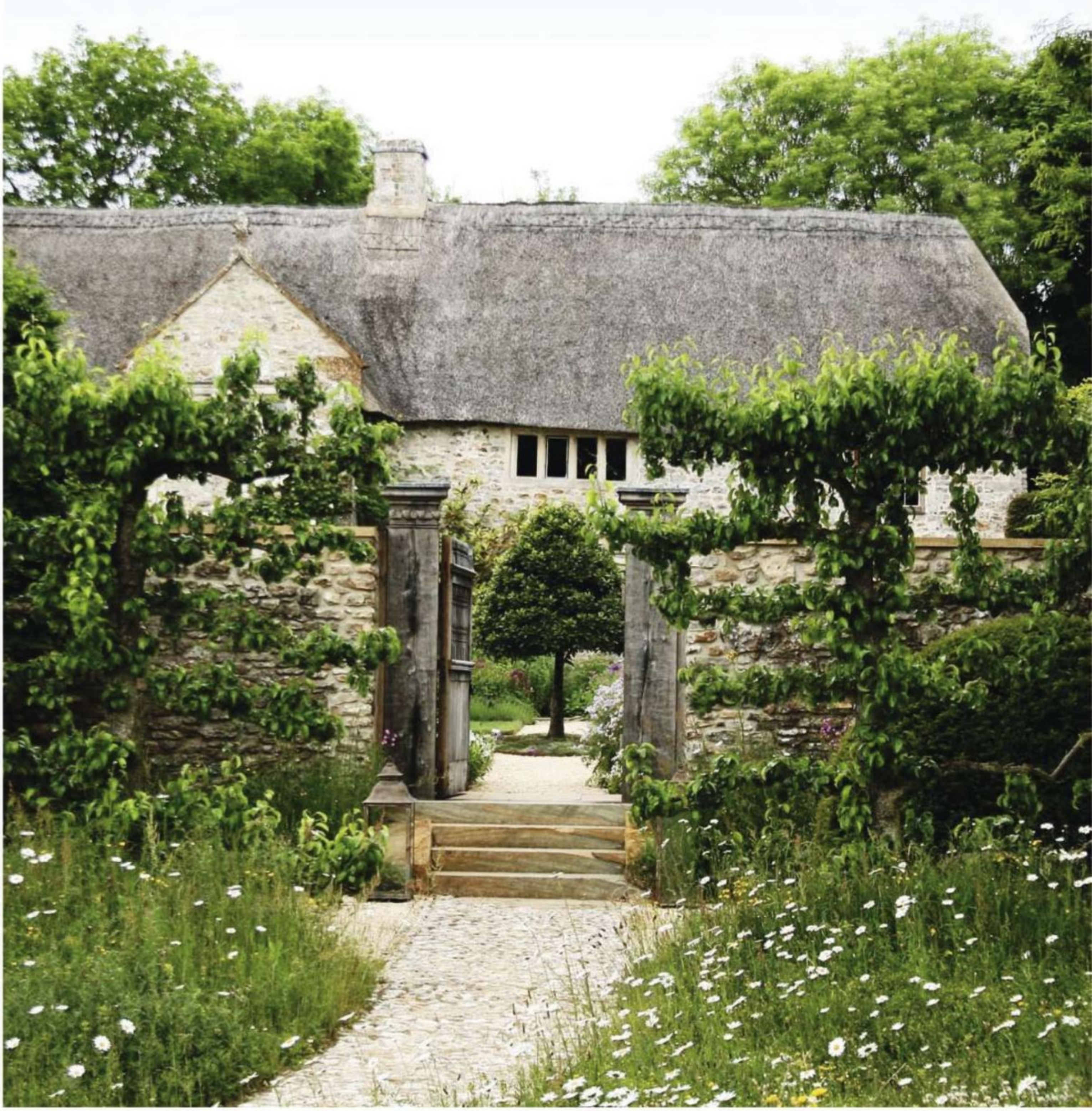
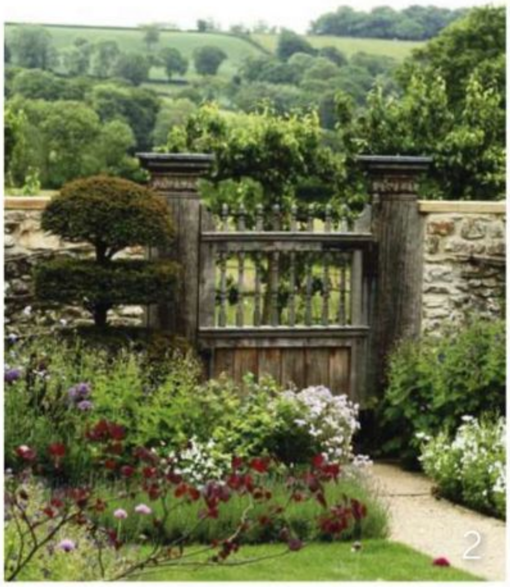
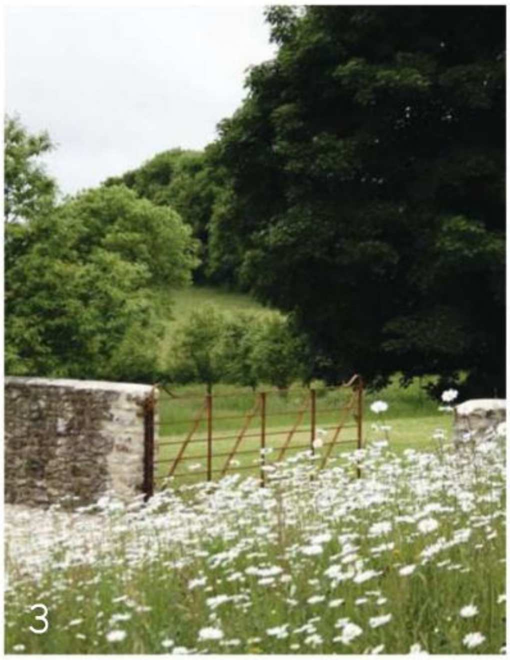
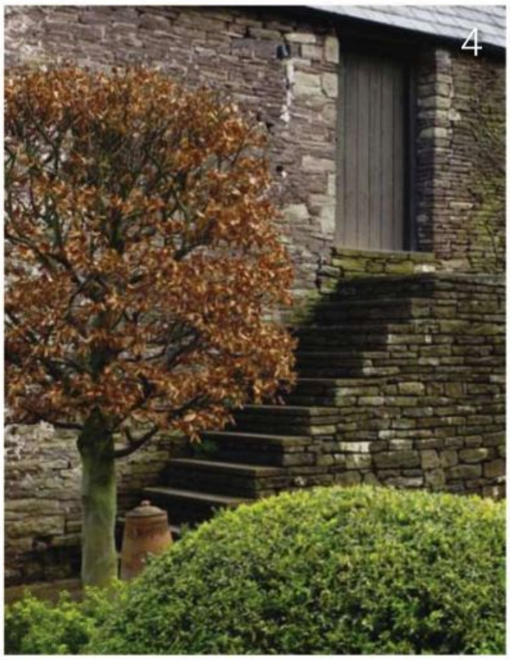
1. Thresholds

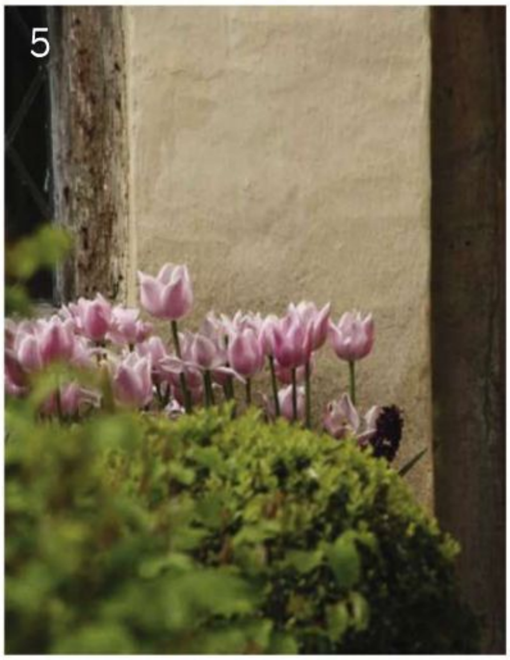
Arriving from a large cobbled yard at this Devon country house, the path narrows and you are drawn through espaliered pears and up stone steps before being delivered into the intimacy of the house courtyard.











WILLIAM COLLINSON

2. Gate details

A beautifully hand-crafted oak gate with spindles copied from the staircase in the house. The sense of arrival is completed by the satisfying sound and action of opening and closing the gate to enter the garden.

3. Concealing and revealing

An entrance can be like a series of veils, gradually revealing what lies beyond. Here, a bank of wild flowers conceals the end of the path leading to an estate railing field gate, which is perfectly in keeping with its rural setting.

4. Indicating arrival

I use topiary as indicators in my own garden, and each piece has a different role to play. Beech indicates an entrance or arrival and this sentinel beech stands at the foot of the steps to the studio at my Monmouthshire home, Allt-y-bela.

5. The front door

There are many ways to signal the route to the front door. Along with using topiary indicators, I place beautiful hand-made pots filled with seasonal flowers.

Entrances and driveways

When someone visits your garden, their first impression starts right at the entrance. Whatever the size of your home or garden, your choice of driveway, path or gate can help you build up an atmosphere and create a taster of what's to come

WORDS **ARNE MAYNARD** PHOTOGRAPHS **BRITT WILLOUGHBY DYER**

6. Approaching the house

In a rural setting, subtle markers are often all that is needed to sign an approach. At Allt-y-Bela, native beech clipped into tiers marks the entrance and grass has been seeded into the centre of the hoggin drive.

7. Entrance indicators

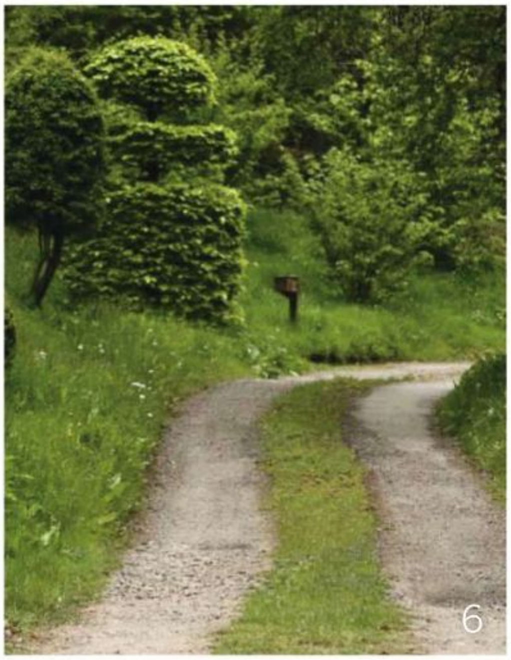
Anything man-made in a natural setting will draw attention to itself. The simplest of entrance indicators, a carved oak marker post, is set into clipped yew hedging at the entrance to an Oxfordshire garden.

8. Entrance to a drive

Outer gates need not be solid. These oak gates are transparent, allowing some views into the property. This allows the garden to sit comfortably in its village setting without shutting out the world.

9. Contrasting surfaces

In this garden the driveway is kept clean and crisp to give it an appropriate formality. This contrasts with a band of long grass and wild flowers flanking the driveway.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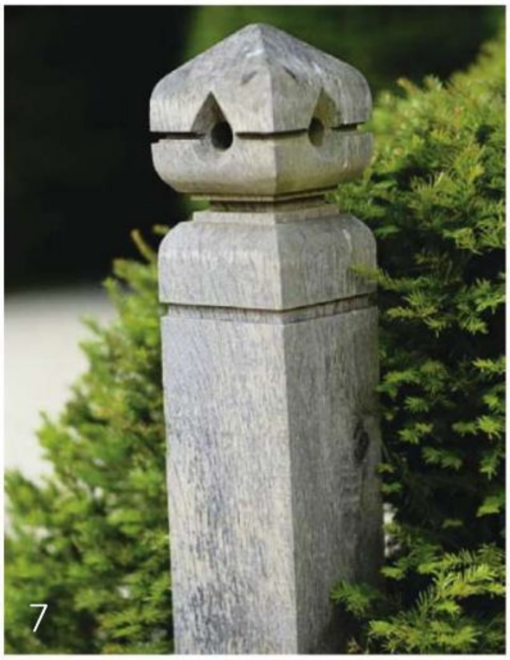
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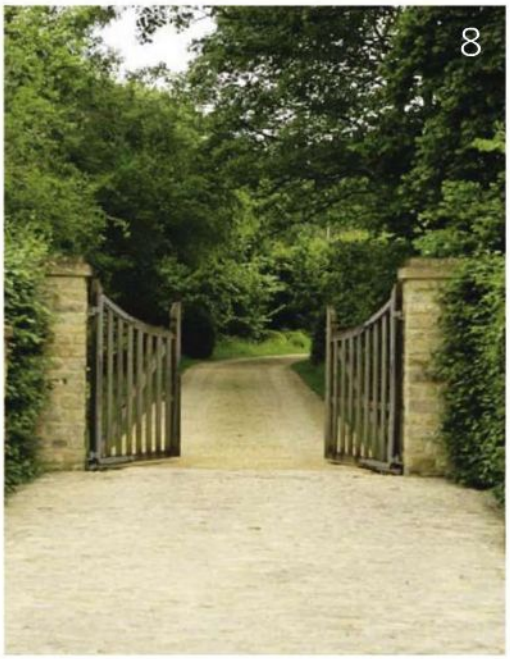
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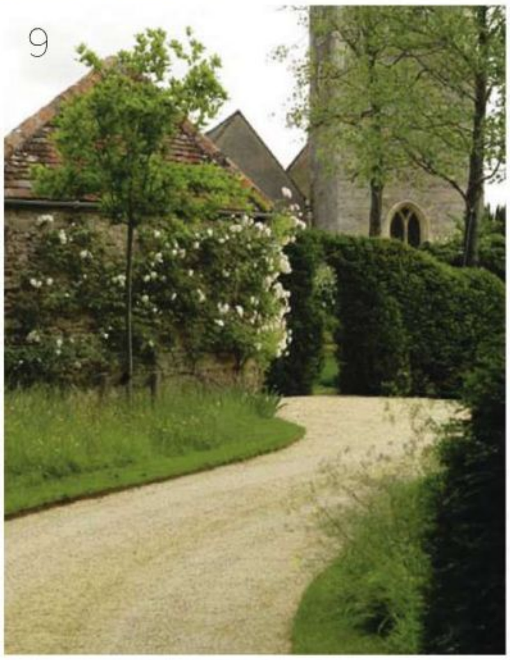
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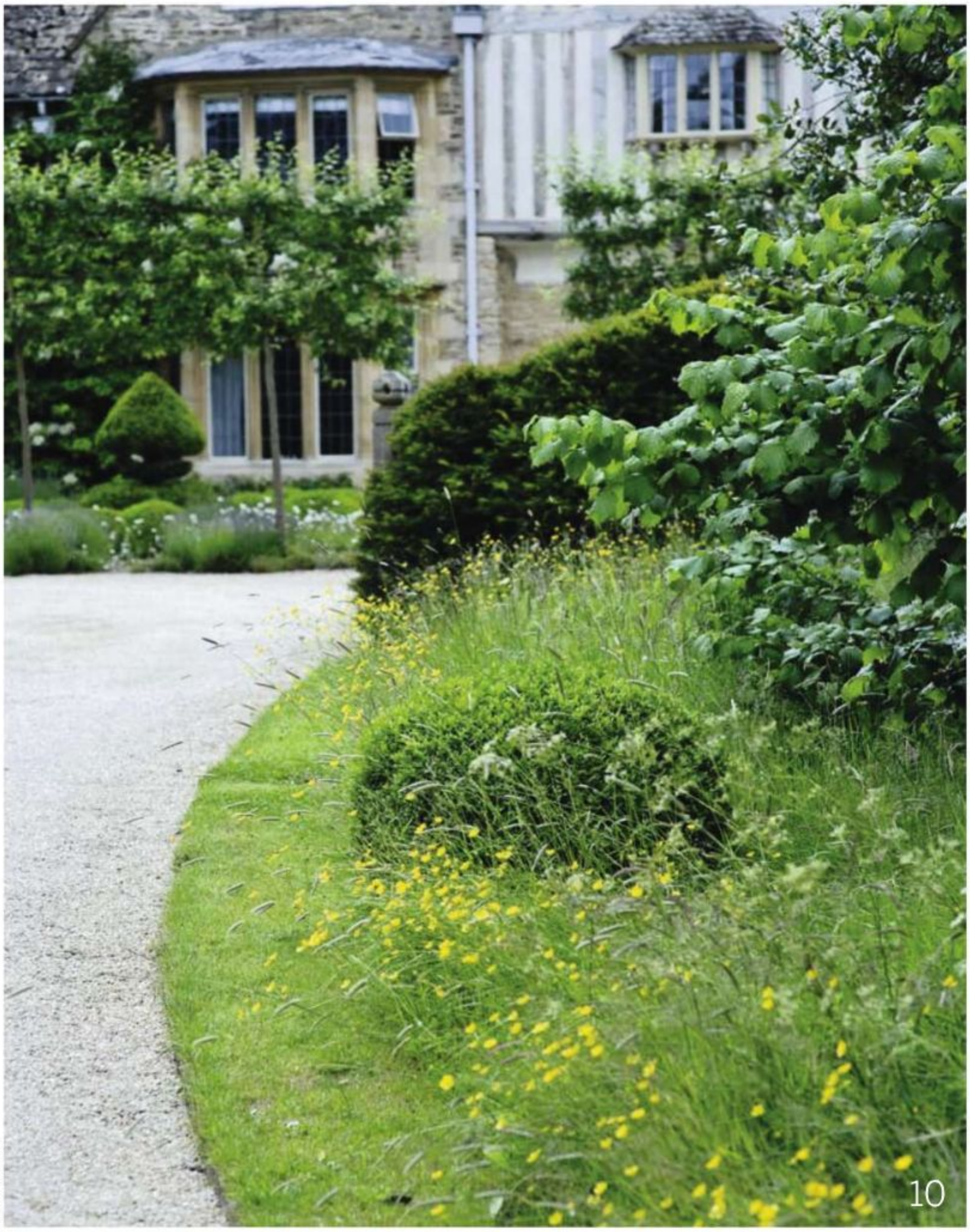
IMAGES 7, 8 & 9 BY NICK HAND

When designing the entrance to a property, including drives, gateways and parking areas, I use 'invisible indicators' to manipulate the way people travel through the garden. This can be done through the hard landscaping surfaces or simply the architecture of plants.

Driveways offer an opportunity to create the all-important sense of arrival and I like to build up the atmosphere gradually. To get to my own garden, you travel down a lush country lane with high banks on either side of native hedgerows full of wildflowers in spring. On the final approach to the house there was originally a five-barred gate across the lane, which felt completely out of place in this deep country setting. We removed it, but I still needed something to indicate which way to go, so we have a native beech clipped in tiers, which acts as a sentinel at the entrance.

Choosing the right materials is important. Because I wanted the drive to feel like a field track, we used a hoggin surface (a compacted mix of crushed stone, sand and clay) and then sowed grass seed into the space between the wheel tracks to give a soft, country feel. For a more formal effect, I use self-binding stone chippings from the local area: golden limestone chippings in the Cotswolds, crushed granite in Cornwall.



JASON INGRAM

10. Entrance courtyard

The area directly in front of this house has been reclaimed from parking and made into a courtyard garden. The clipped yew hedge at the end of the curve hides the cars and the chipping surface unites the drive, parking and garden areas.

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This gives a stable surface which not only looks better but is easier to negotiate than loose gravel. For a smaller, more intimate entrance I might use a textural surface of brick or cobbles.

These details contribute to the ceremony of arrival, and the same applies to gateways. The entrance to a drive could be through a plain wooden gate or just a pair of oak posts. Closer to the house, a pedestrian gate might be given some ornamentation, a carved detail, relating perhaps to the interior of the house.

The issue of how to deal with parking is a major one. All too often, cars are parked in front of the house. Wherever we have enough space, though, we build a garden in front of the house. In large gardens, we move parking away from the house and screen it with hedging or pleached trees.

Maintaining a unity of surface is important. Again, we use limestone chippings because they give a courtyard feel. This surface is suitable for both planting and parking. In small spaces, where there are no other parking options, it is still possible to make the space in front of the house *feel* like a garden, by panting low plants in the chipping surface around the parking area. Plants such as lavender or lady's mantle (*Alchemilla mollis*) will thrive in the free-draining conditions. ☐

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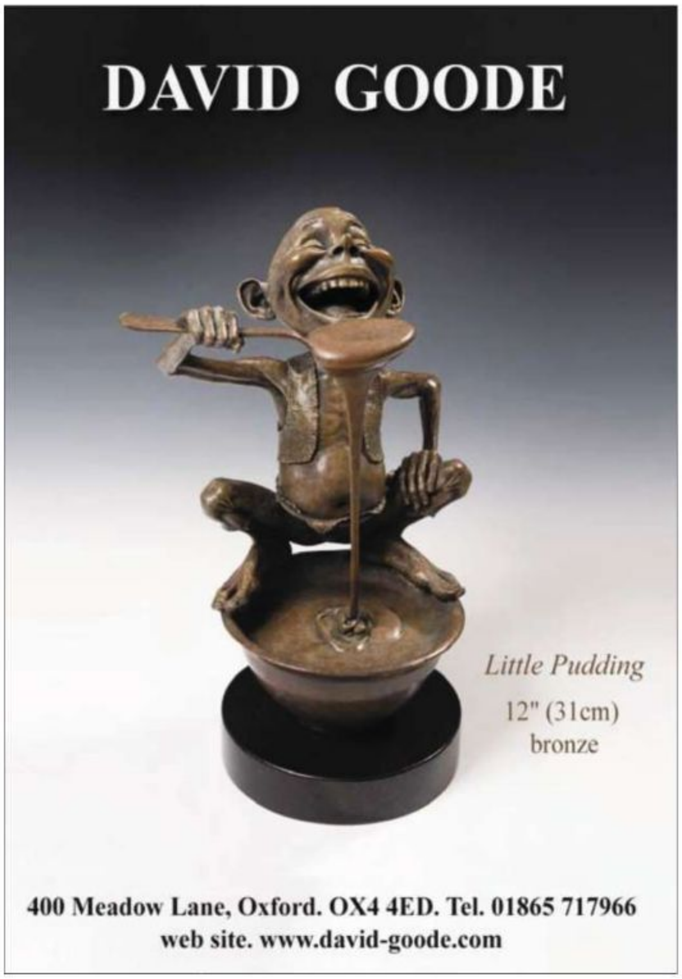
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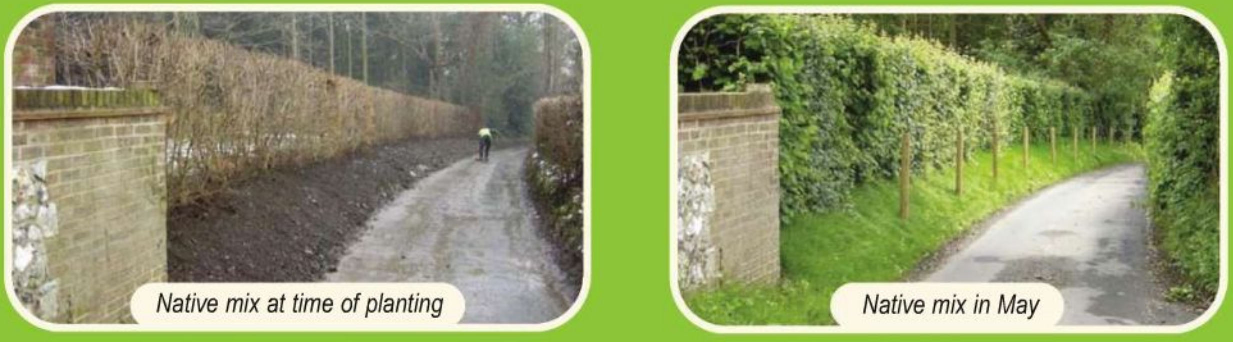

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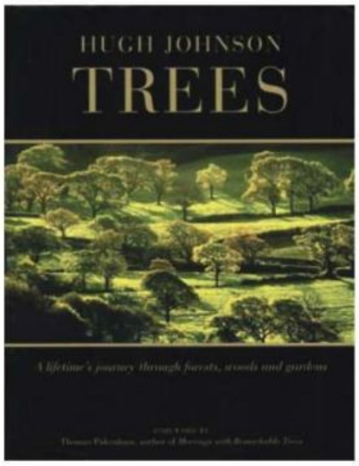


TREES: A lifetime's journey through forests, woods and gardens

by Hugh Johnson Mitchell Beazley, £30, ISBN 978-1845330552

In 1974, when I began my career in the tree world, one of the first books I ever bought was *The International Book of Trees* by Hugh Johnson. I soon became fascinated by the world of trees to which Hugh introduced me, and many others too. Most amateurs and professionals will own a copy, but over the 37 years that this book has been in print it has become outdated and has migrated from the coffee table to the higher shelves of my library.

It is refreshing to see this book back in the shops. It's just as inviting as ever, but fully revised and updated. It now deserves to be thought of as a significant reference work in its own right. Lavishly illustrated and easy to read, this personal journey through the world of temperate trees is hard to put down.

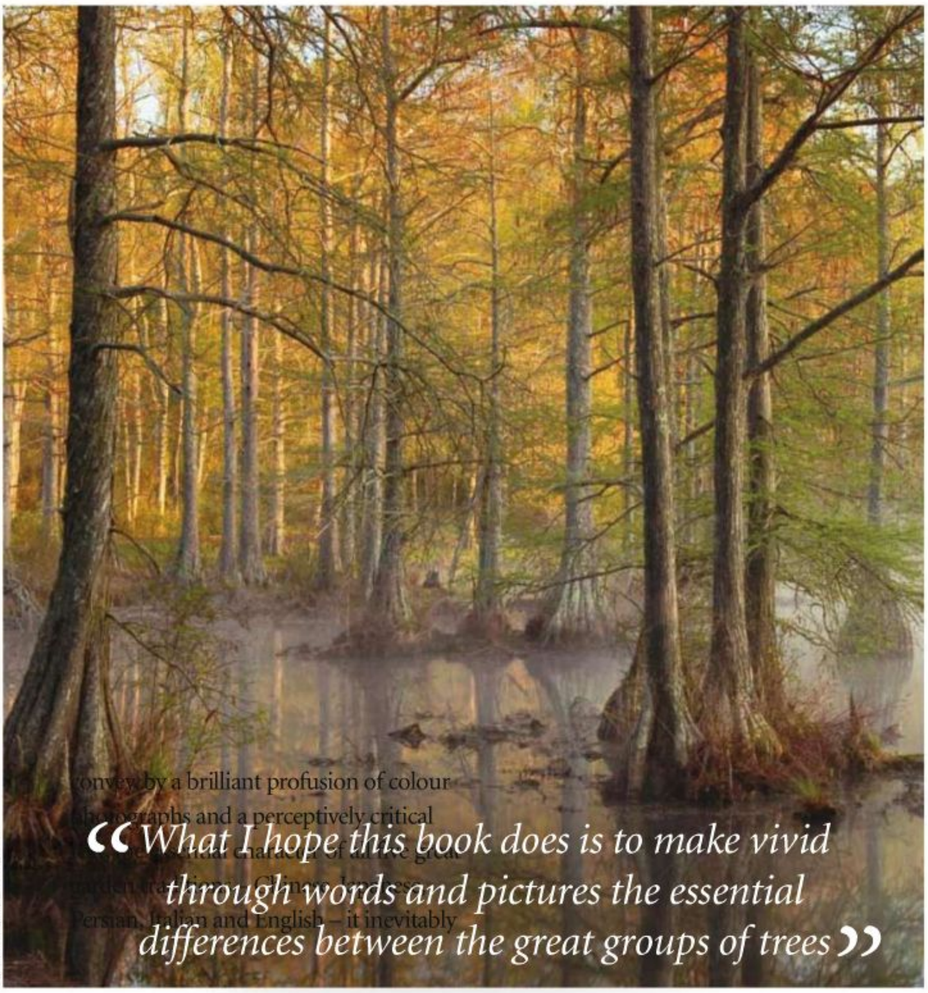
The format and contents mirror the first edition, broken down into three sections, beginning with *The World of Trees.* This introduces the reader to all aspects of tree biology, plant introductions and the plant collectors, finishing with tree planting and maintenance. The reader is then set for a botanical tour covering the identification and recognition of more than 600 species of the tree world beginning with conifers and followed by broadleaves, complete with Hugh's own personal observations in his private garden.

The text is authoritative, and most remains unchanged, with new introductions to each group. Additions and updates are included where needed, especially in areas such as tree planting and pruning, which has changed so much since the first edition. The consultant editor is John Grimshaw, editor of the recently published *New Trees* (Royal Botanic Gardens, 2009), so we can rest assured that the botanical nomenclature will be up to date.

The real change, and the greatest improvement to this book, is the exquisite layout and clear modern fonts with more than 350 new mouthwatering photographs and more than 200 colour artworks with informative captions. These are some of the best illustrative images that I have seen in a tree reference book and complement the text perfectly.

This wonderfully revised work has brought this reference book back to the fore and will continue to inspire and fascinate tree enthusiasts, both amateur and professional, as it did me some 37 years ago.

Tony Kirkham is head of the arboretum at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.



“What I hope this book does is to make vivid through words and pictures the essential differences between the great groups of trees”

CLINT FARLINGER / ALAMY

In his new book, Hugh Johnson celebrates the beauty of trees from around the world, including these swamp cypresses (*Taxodium distichum*) growing in the Big Cypress National Preserve in southern Florida.

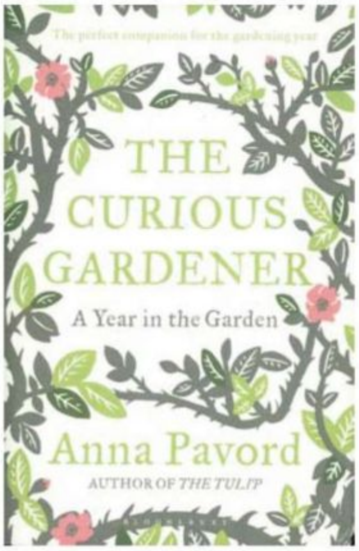
book offer

RRP £30. **Reader offer price £27** including p&p. For details on how to order, see page 103

Book reviews

THE CURIOUS GARDENER: A year in the garden

by Anna Pavord Bloomsbury, £20, ISBN 978-1408808887



Does 'the loneliness of the long-distance garden writer' truly exist? If so, I doubt Anna Pavord is a sufferer. Her Saturday column in *The Independent* began when the paper was set up in 1986, since when she has somehow found time to raise a family, contribute an associate editorship to this magazine and write eight much-lauded books, including *The Tulip* in 1999.

The Curious Gardener is the fruit of her *Independent* labours, a golden opportunity to discover (or re-read if you're a regular follower) one of the most intelligent voices in English-language gardening. What impresses most, although there's nothing strikingly unusual about it, is that Pavord was a reluctant gardener as a child – troubled by the likes of whether she'd make it to the local cinema while her mother fiddled endlessly with the lupins. Attempts to grow a few flowers on an eight-foot stretch of Thames towpath alongside a Shepperton houseboat in early married life were thwarted by passing kleptomaniacs – the pleasures of gardening only revealing themselves slowly after the family moved to an old Dorset rectory set in an acre and a half of garden. This was Pavord's learning ground for 35 years, a place where she learned that gardening 'was not necessarily about an end result', it was the *doing* of it that mattered.

This collection of more than 70 pieces (decorated with 13 wood engravings by Howard Phipps) is arranged in a monthly sequence, each supplemented by endnotes that trigger seasonal thoughts on jobs to be done. The range of topics reflect not only extensive travels throughout the UK, but journeys to Corsica and far-flung Costa Rica and California. On the way we encounter such grandees as Charles Sprague Sargent, William Robinson, Vita Sackville-West and Christopher Lloyd yet, typically, it's the lesser-known, the unsung heroes and heroines of horticulture, that fuel the author's greatest curiosity.

The balance between ornamental gardening and the growing of fruit and vegetables is well judged, while nuggets of truth proliferate – none more so, perhaps, than her assertion that 'In gardening, the future is what matters.' We can all take comfort from that.

David Wheeler is the founding editor of the horticultural journal Hortus.

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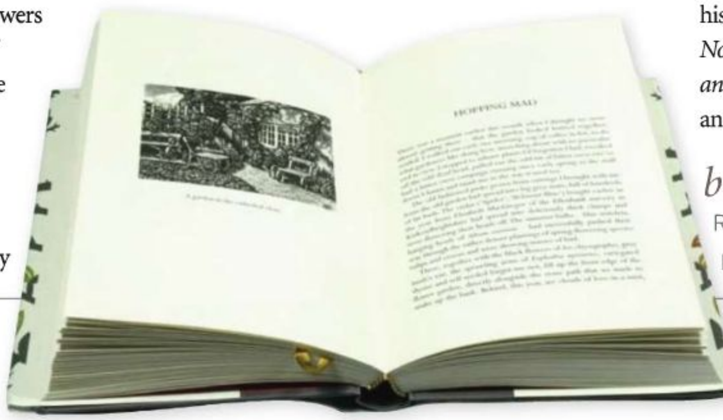

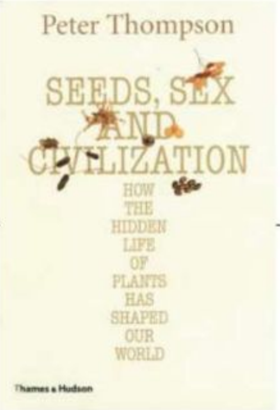
Peter Thompson
SEEDS, SEX AND CIVILIZATION
HOW THE HIDDEN LIFE OF PLANTS HAS SHAPED OUR WORLD
Thames & Hudson

SEEDS, SEX & CIVILIZATION: How the hidden life of plants has shaped our world

Peter Thompson

Thames & Hudson, £19.95

ISBN 978-0500251706

The seed is central to all our relationships with plants. Here the late Peter Thompson, former head of plant physiology at Kew, shares a lifetime's knowledge of seeds, and explains how our use of them forms the basis of our civilization.

Thompson first introduces us to a cast of characters who, during the 18th and 19th centuries, made the key scientific discoveries about plant reproduction. These advances have made possible the spectacular increases in agricultural productivity that have fed our population. They have also enabled us to develop the varied flora that adorns our gardens.

Further chapters explore modern lab-based plant breeding, the battle to conserve the world's genetic resources and the behaviour of seeds – fascinating for gardeners who often wonder why some seeds are so difficult to germinate.

This book is highly readable, but non-specialist readers might feel they are plunging in too deep. It has an old-fashioned quality – the literary flair and editorial architecture which gives sparkle to much modern history and science writing is lacking.

Noël Kingsbury is a planting designer and author of Hybrid – the History and Science of Plant Breeding.

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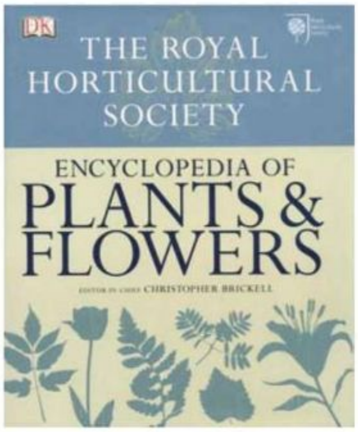
THE RHS ENCYCLOPEDIA OF PLANTS & FLOWERS

ed Christopher Brickell Dorling Kindersley/RHS, £35, ISBN 978-1405354233



The updated and improved fifth edition of this mighty tome boasts concise, informative descriptions of 8,000 plants (1,000 more than the previous publication) and is divided into ten sections, ranging from annuals to trees and tender plants. Like previous editions, the heart of the book is the illustrated plant catalogue, backed by a plant directory, with cross references and additional information on a further 3,000 plants – it certainly lives up to its billing as an encyclopedia. Particularly valuable are the pages focusing on specific genera, themes like shrubs for berries and comprehensive plant lists for different soil types, which help the reader to make the correct, informed choice.

A new introductory chapter on creating a garden, which includes sections on inspirational styles, assessing your site and soil, designing with plants and using colour, is well worth reading. Do this before delving further into the book, and it stirs the mind to the many imaginative options available when designing with plants. However, trying to cover vast subjects like composting and pruning in a few paragraphs is less successful.

Overall the images are excellent. A few are too small, underexposed, out of focus or lacking in detail, something which is particularly frustrating when trying to identify plants bereft of obvious features, like flowers or fruit. The challenges of reproducing the garden's myriad shades and colours in print is occasionally demonstrated too, particularly among the blue flowers, several of which are overly pale. But considering the sheer volume of images and the fact that some of the images are not taken by professional photographers, these are minor quibbles and do not dilute the overall impact of the book. Colour coding the tabs on the edge of the pages would have made it even easier to use.

It is a magnificent achievement to have included such a wide range of familiar and unusual plants in one volume and the knowledge it contains, alongside its practical applications, make it well worth the cover price. Like its predecessors, it is a 'must have book' for every gardener and plantsman.

Matthew Biggs is a gardener who regularly appears as a panellist on Radio 4's Gardeners' Question Time.

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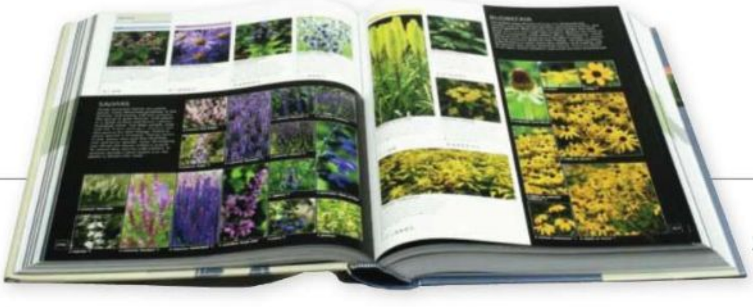

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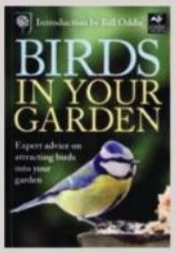
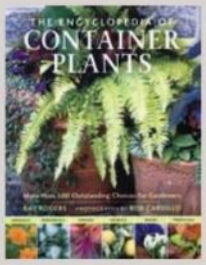


BIRDS IN YOUR GARDEN
by Christopher Helm
Concise and accessible guide to bird species commonly seen in British gardens.
A&C Black, £9.99
ISBN 978-1408130261



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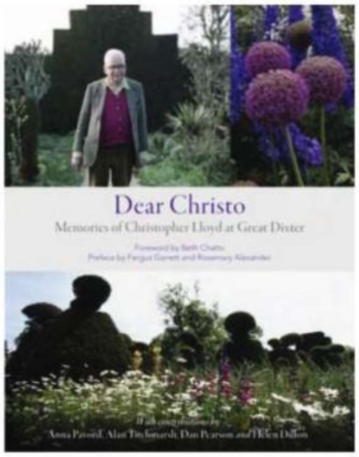
Book reviews

DEAR CHRISTO: Memories of Christopher Lloyd at Great Dixter

by various authors Timber Press, £18.99, ISBN 978-1604692235



This collection of reminiscences of Christopher Lloyd by a cross section of close friends – professional and student gardeners, plantsmen and admirers from home and abroad – is a reminder of just how many people, of different ages and backgrounds, he inspired and touched. For many it was his books that first opened their eyes to the possibilities offered by his kind of creative gardening.

The ecologist James Hitchmough says reading *Foliage Plants* and *The Well-Tempered Garden*, books that he found 'intensely personal, provocative, full of verve and wit', had such an impact on him as a 16-year-old that he changed his career plan from studying biology or biochemistry to horticulture, a switch his careers teacher was not impressed with.

It's clear that many people feared Christo's sharp tongue. Those who got to know him well had to learn to cope with this right up to the end of his life.

The reminiscences are arranged by subject matter – *Arrivals*, *The Plants*, *The House*, *Visits*, *Travels* and so on – so it's a surprise that *Food* isn't one of them as there are plenty of anecdotes about the dishes Christo whipped up for his guests at Dixter.

There are rather too many descriptions of first impressions on stepping through the garden gate – only a few stand out – and much repetition of key events.

For me, it's those little nuggets of information that flesh out the man whose main attributes are now so well known. He admitted, for example, that he had always wanted to get rid of the topiary at Great Dixter but hadn't dared because they had been planted by his father and were part of the house's history. Pragmatic, he advised gardeners to bring cut flowers or garden produce but not a plant when visiting a friend's garden, thereby avoiding future embarrassment for the friend in case the plant might not flourish.

The accompanying photographs, ranging from relaxed poses of Christo, mainly in his latter years, to gorgeous plant combinations and views of the garden through the seasons, are a bonus, as is the fact that the royalties from sales will be paid to the Great Dixter Charitable Trust.

Annie Gatti is a writer and former editor of the Garden Design Journal.

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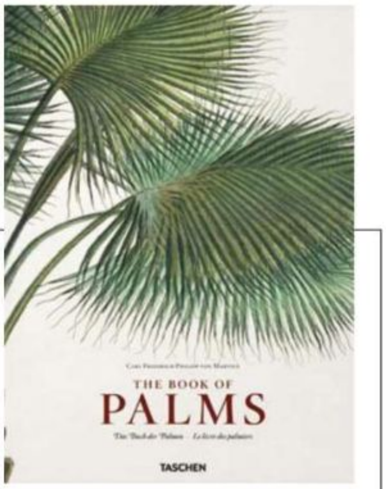

THE BOOK OF PALMS

by Carl Friedrich Philipp von Martius Taschen, £99.99, ISBN 978-3836517799

The Book of Palms from Taschen, the publisher best known its books on art and erotic photography, is as much a tale of obsession and exotica as Helmut Newton's *Sumo*. It's also equally deserving of its own special table – but there will be no embarrassing moments when leafing through it with your grandchildren.

In 1817, at the age of 22, Carl Friedrich Philipp von Martius embarked on a four-year natural history expedition to South America. There he became hooked on palms. The botanical chronicles of his travels were made into a three-volume opus that was 30 years in the making. A copy in Bonn University Library, with hand-coloured lithographs, has now been given the impeccable Taschen treatment.

It's pure plant porn. We can't grow palms in our Wiltshire garden, but this book has us drooling over their native habitats, cell structure, seed pods and hairy or spiny cortexes. The poster-sized pull-outs are an absurdly gratifying adult version of a child's pop-up book.

This is a book that re-ignites any nature-jaded palate, and will have you booking a holiday to Brazil, so it comes at a price.

Tania Compton is a garden designer and writer.

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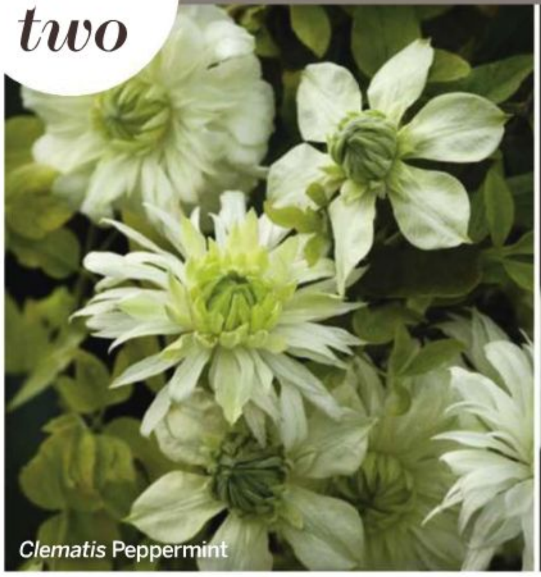

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*Offer excludes p&p, Rolawn products, gift vouchers and magazine subscriptions. Call 0845 402 5300 to request a catalogue.

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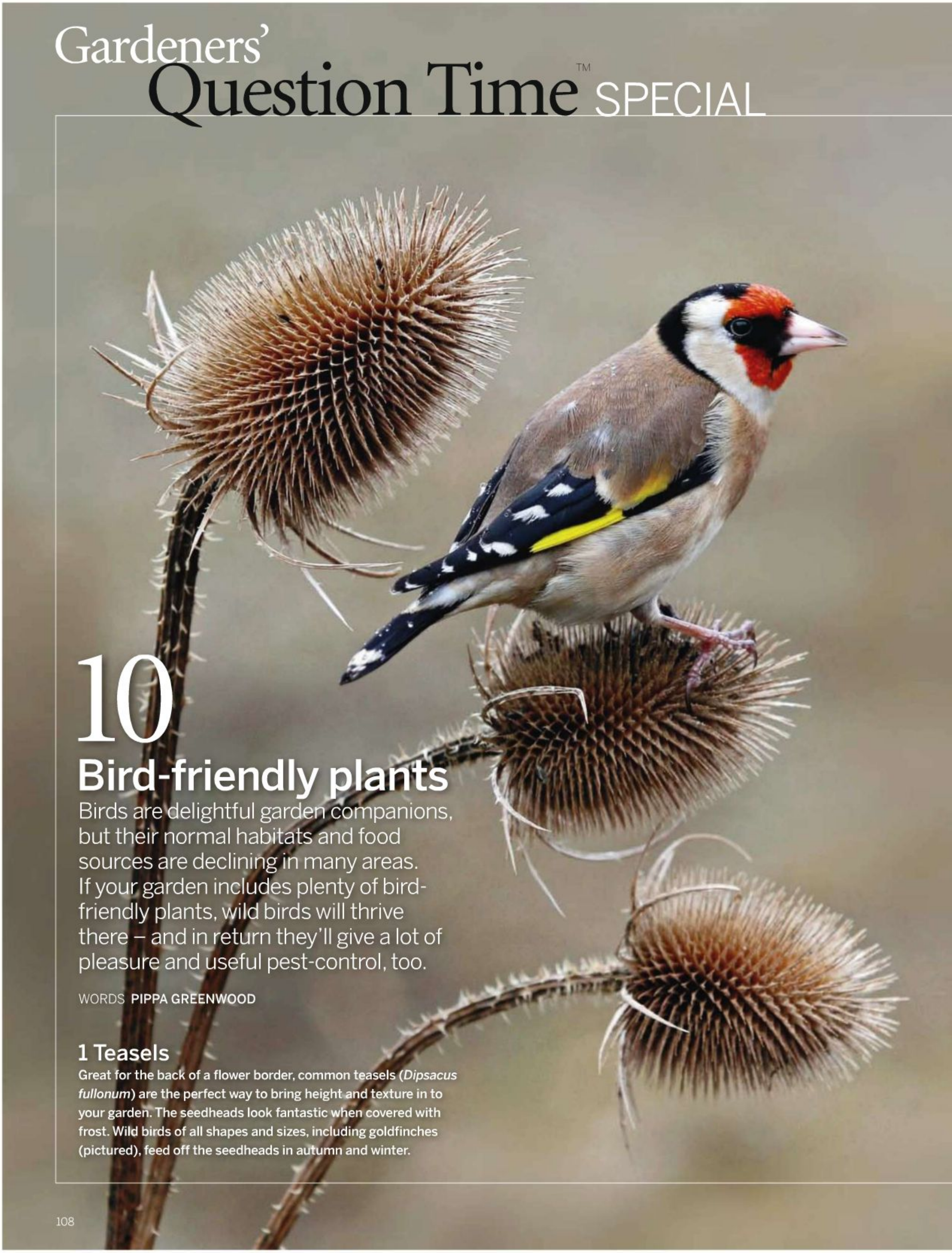


10

Bird-friendly plants

Birds are delightful garden companions, but their normal habitats and food sources are declining in many areas. If your garden includes plenty of bird-friendly plants, wild birds will thrive there – and in return they'll give a lot of pleasure and useful pest-control, too.

WORDS **PIPPA GREENWOOD**

1 Teasels

Great for the back of a flower border, common teasels (*Dipsacus fullonum*) are the perfect way to bring height and texture in to your garden. The seedheads look fantastic when covered with frost. Wild birds of all shapes and sizes, including goldfinches (pictured), feed off the seedheads in autumn and winter.

BBC Pippa Greenwood is a leading plant pathologist and author of several gardening books. She also appears regularly on Radio 4's *Gardeners' Question Time* and this month reports from the Fletcher Moss Gardens, birthplace of the RSPB. Friday, 26 November, 3pm (repeated Sunday, 28 November, 2pm).

GIANPIERO FERRARI / FLPA / THE GARDEN COLLECTION

2 *Buddleja globosa*

A shrub covered with fragrant, bright orange, spherical flower heads in early summer. It's deciduous to semi-evergreen, depending on location, and makes a fairly good perching point. Bullfinches in particular love it.

3 Firethorn

Pyracantha is an evergreen shrub, often trained up walls. It has a dense network of armoured stems, which makes it great as a nesting site. There are various forms, with white flowers in spring and red, orange or yellow berries in autumn. Birds feast on the berries, especially red ones.

4 Dogwood

Dogwoods have various attributes – *Cornus kousa* var. *chinensis* (pictured) has stunning white bracts, *C. stolonifera* brightly coloured winter stems. Robins and mistle thrushes love the berries in late summer and early autumn.

5 Hawthorn

Native hawthorns (*Crataegus monogyna*) are a useful ingredient of mixed hedges. Some cultivars such as *C. laevigata* 'Paul's Scarlet' are more showy, but all have white or pink flowers in spring and red berries (or 'haws') in late summer and autumn. Hawthorns support more than 150 species of insect, a rich food source for birds such as wrens and blue tits. Starlings, thrushes, blackbirds and redwings feed on the haws. Dense branches covered with sharp thorns provide a safe place to roost and nest.

6 Guelder rose

The guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus*) has showy white flower clusters followed by translucent red shiny berries. An attractive shrub often in native hedging, where it provides useful shelter and nesting sites. Birds love the berries, in particular bullfinches and mistle thrushes.

7 Honeysuckle

A strong-growing, twining climber, whose delicate, often candelabra-like flowers generally have a superb perfume. They look lovely trained over a fence or pergola, or scrambling through a large shrub. A useful roosting place or nesting site when growth is dense. Birds, especially warblers, bullfinches and thrushes, feast on the shiny red berries. My personal favourites are *L. periclymenum* 'Graham Thomas' and cultivars of *L. japonicum*.

8 *Berberis x stenophylla*

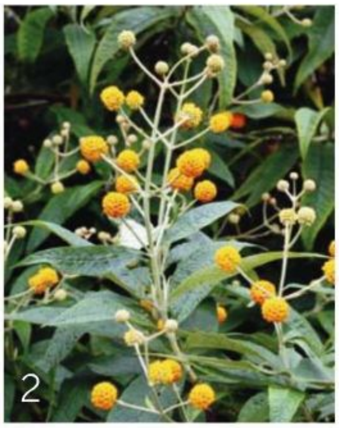
Arching, evergreen stems, densely clad with tiny bright orange-yellow flowers. Great as a shrub or in informal hedging. Serious thorns and a dense habit (like many other berberis, including *B. darwinii*), makes it a useful roosting, hiding and nesting place. The berries, too, are attractive to birds.

9 Candytuft

Iberis have white or pale purple to pink flower heads in summer or winter, depending on the cultivar. Lots of forms are available, both perennial and annual, and all seem attractive to the insects on which birds feast, including caterpillars.

10 Ivy

With attractively shaped evergreen leaves, either green and variegated, these self-clinging plants are widely used to clothe walls and fences. Established ivies provide a dense cover for roosting birds, somewhere for them to nest and a useful supply of berries and insects for food. My personal favourites are *Hedera helix* 'Glacier' and *H. helix* 'Oro di Bogliasco' (='Goldheart').□



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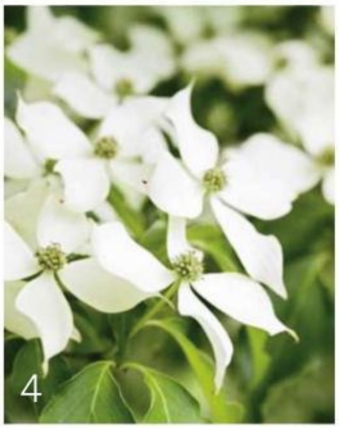

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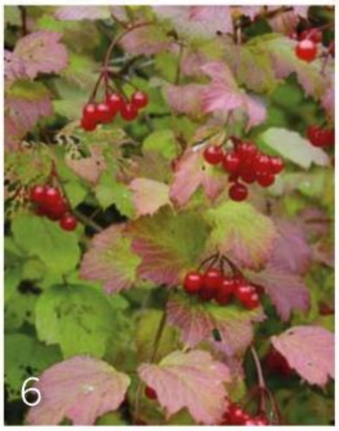

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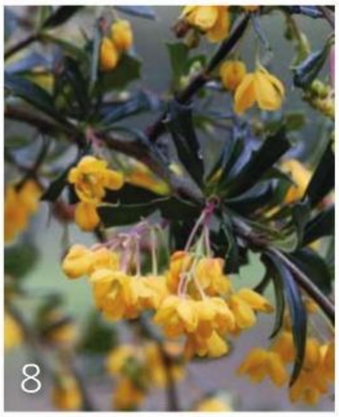

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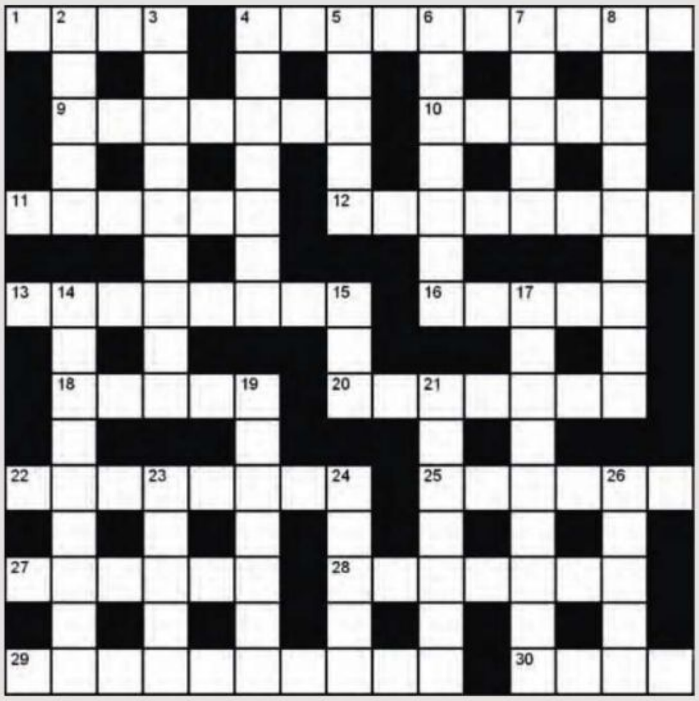

ACROSS

1 Mothers, a familiar subject of our *Plant profile* (4)

4 Earl Grey's ancestral seat, with important arboretum (6,4)

9 Jeremy Swift's garden – 'hollow' in Welsh – apt then, perhaps? (3,4)

10 With Jack produces a flag (non-flowering sort) (5)

11 Horticultural dynasty and nurseries, begun in the 19th century: in part, love it – charming (6)

12 *Salvia pinguifolia* (of mint family) – pop music wise man (4,4)

13 Insecticide, now widely banned, scattered in riddle (8)

16 'Adam's needle' is one cultivar of this relative of agave (5)

18 The beech tree – tiresome job before you and me! (5)

20 Preserves food in vinegar (7)

22 Frantic, I clip for … fruitful result! (8)

25 One of our nurseryman's favourite chrysanthemums (6)

27 Dancing partner's spicy plant (6)

28 Coyish about a fragrant, evergreen shrub of rue family (7)

29 Arboretum in Gloucestershire famed for its Japanese maples (10)

30 Fungal disease in potatoes, cabbages? (4)

DOWN

2 Undo eg twine binding topless relative! (5)

3 Marginal pond plant *Acorus calamus* – makes cute paving stone! (5,4)

4 Ling found in cloche at herbarium (7)

5 Liquid sometimes put on lily and cress (5)

6 Texture of a crisphead lettuce (7)

7 The stinging ones of nettles, maybe, in fresh air sites (5)

8 Desire to be an informer– a sign your lawn needs attention! (4,5)

14 Unproductive, making it fern? Lie! (9)

15 Quick drink to frostily halt the growth of vegetation (3)

17 Blanching of a green plant – slosh coir about! (9)

19 Species of crocus coming first in Essex town (7)

21 Rotten garden waste? That's rich! (7)

23 Easily portable element of a greenhouse? (5)

24 Opuntias, say, perform inside hyacinth's centre (5)

26 Okinawa zoologist partly returned our nurseryman's favourite *Allium thunbergii* (5)

SOLUTIONS WILL BE PRINTED NEXT MONTH

OCTOBER'S SOLUTIONS

ACROSS: 1 *Abutilon*; **6** Relic; **9** Lawn; **10** Tired; **11** Pole; **12** Over-run; **13** Candie; **14** Savill; **16** Seed tray; **18** Majestic; **21** Sorrel; **22** Whorls; **24** Provence; **26** Slug; **27** Erect; **28** Twig; **29** Stems; **30** *Sidalcea*.

DOWN: 2 Bravo; **3** Tangerine; **4** Lateral; **5** Nerines; **6** Radicle; **7** Lupin; **8** Cultivate; **15** Anaphalis; **17** Tormentil; **19** Tassels; **20** Cypress; **21** Spotted; **23** Rogue; **25** Chive.

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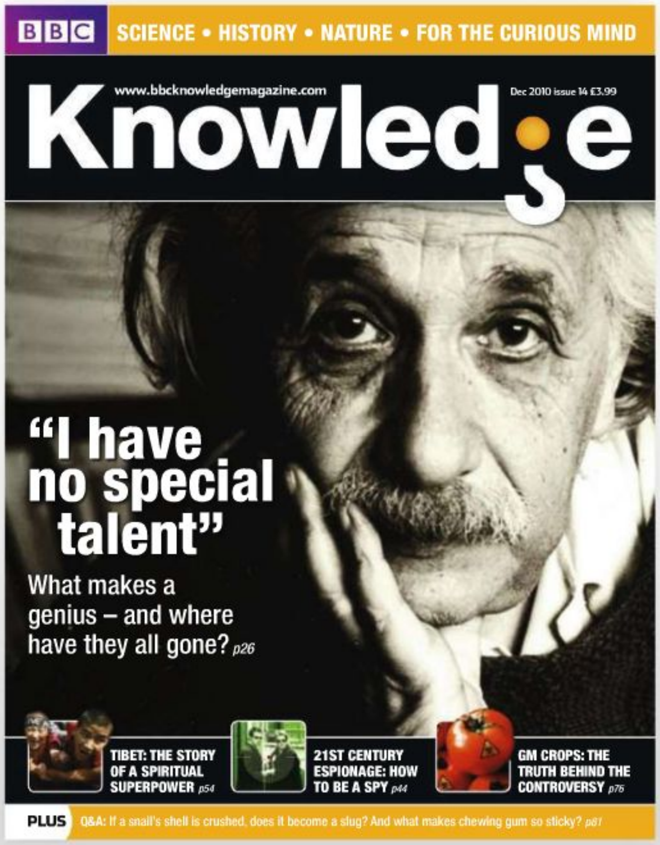
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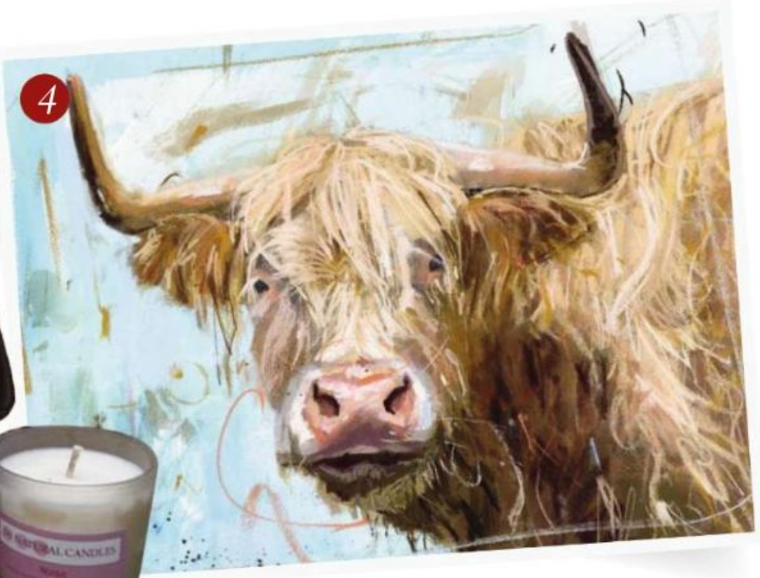
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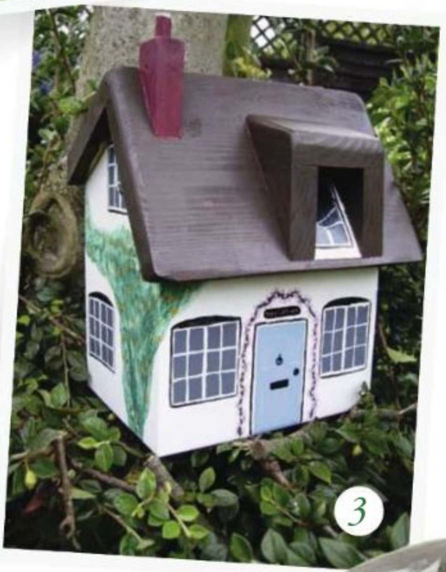

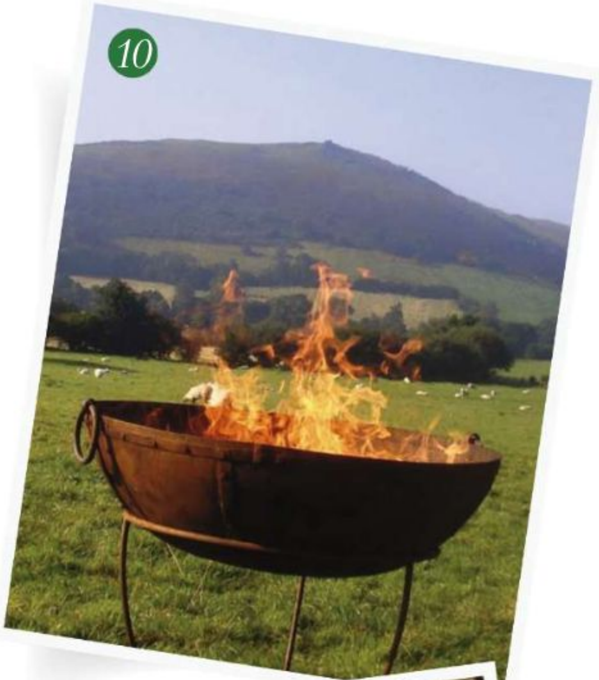

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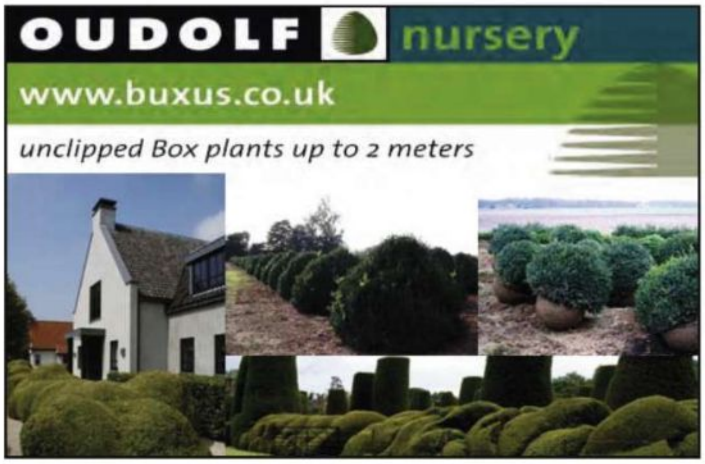

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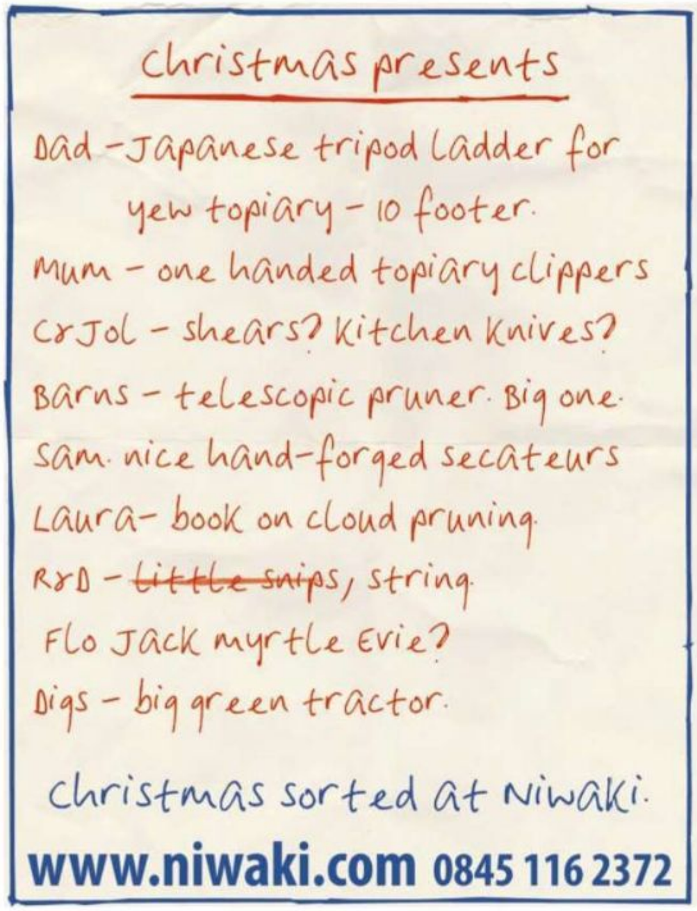

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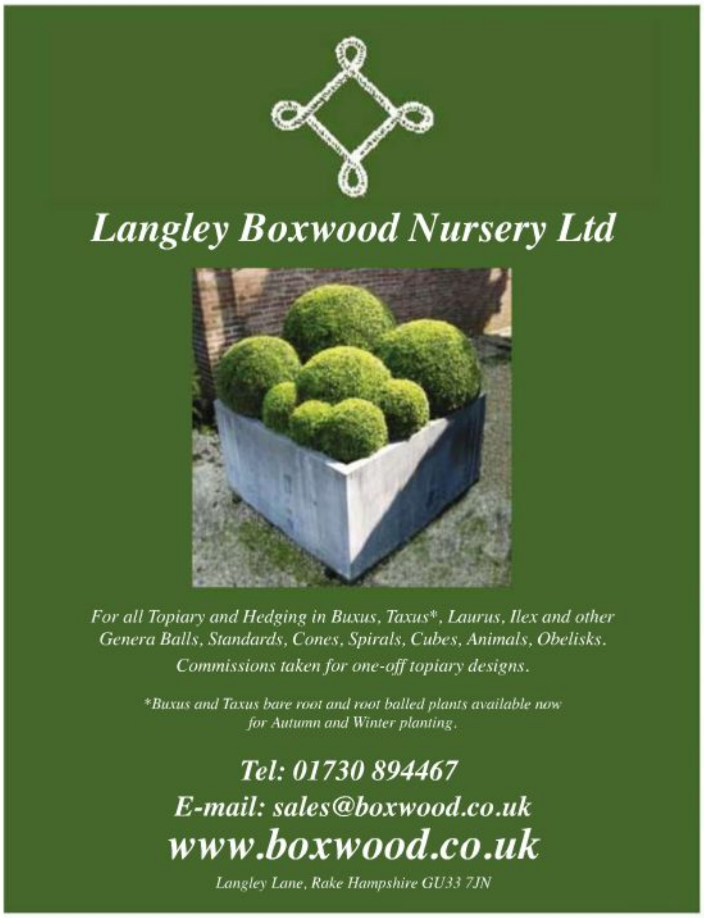

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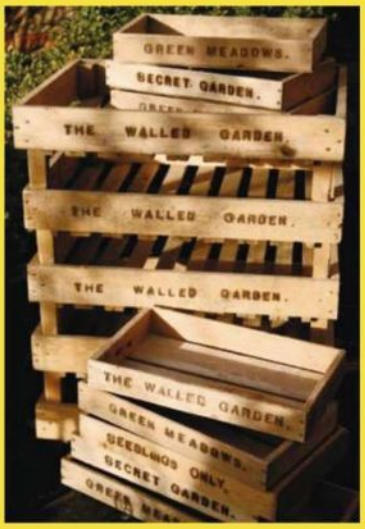

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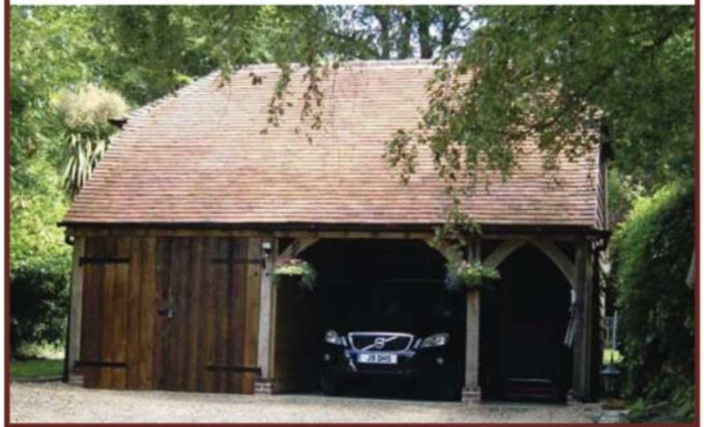

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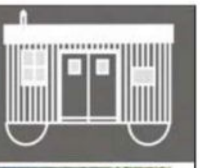

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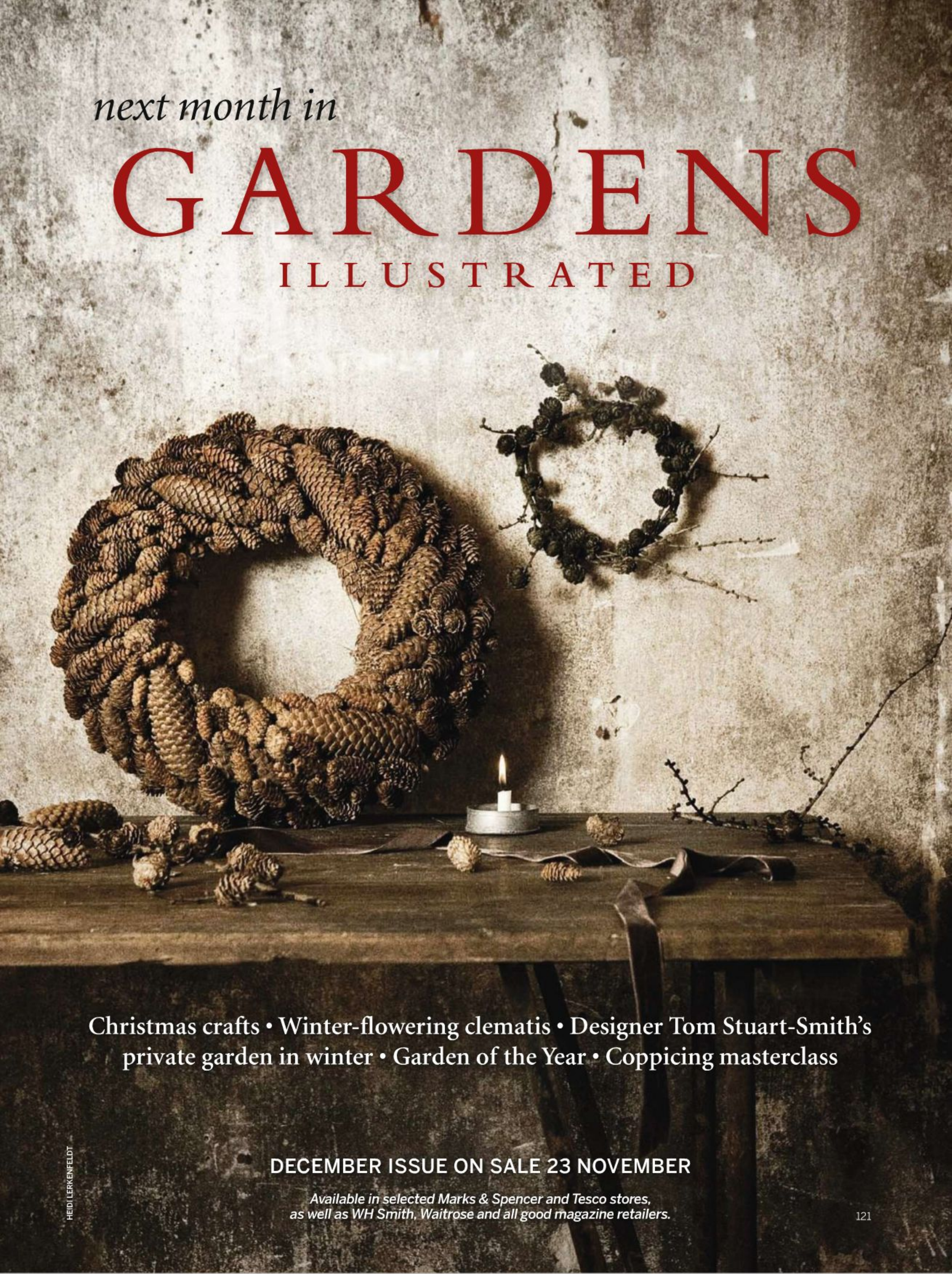

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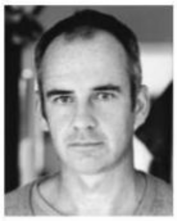
Foul-weather friends

Evergreen plants keep Frank's garden looking vibrant in winter – without a yew hedge in sight

WORDS **FRANK RONAN** ILLUSTRATION **MARK HEARLD**



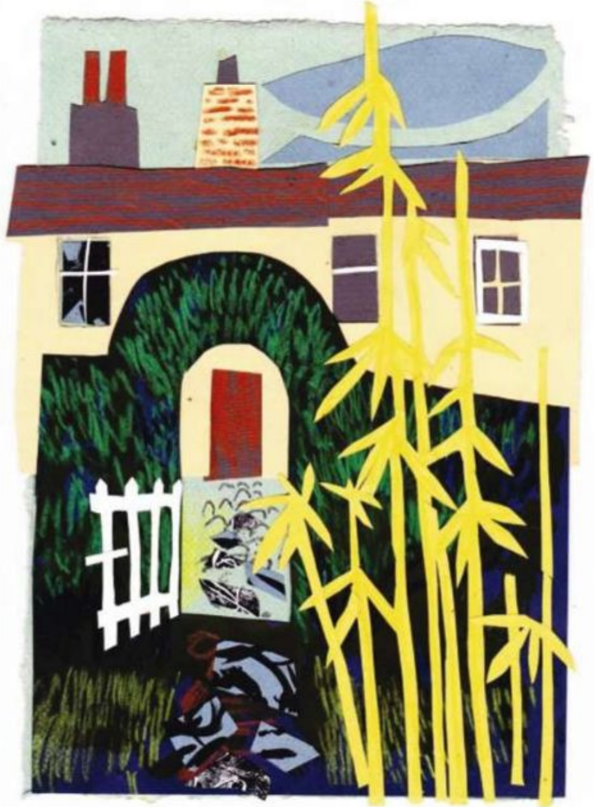
Frank Ronan is a novelist who lives and gardens in Worcestershire

In theory, now is the time when we are to be glad of our evergreens. They will, so the theory goes, keep us cheerful through the dark months and maintain an illusion of life when our treacherous, deciduous fair-weather-friends have deserted us. Personally, I prefer the sort of friend who comes around in fair weather, when he can be cheerfully entertained, to the kind who hangs about in foul, when I should be working. Even so, I have an annual pang at the onset of winter; a needling doubt that I was wrong to ignore conventional wisdom and leave yew hedges out of the design of this garden entirely. How on earth is one to survive between now and March without formal structure; without green rooms, living battlements and topiary?

The answer lies in the question: when someone describes a garden as "a series of outdoor rooms", I immediately lose interest. "Why not stay indoors," I think, "and phone the florist?" It is not by accident that I have chosen to live in a part of the world where the landscape is ragged and informal, and it would be perverse of me to make a garden that sat on it, awkward as a waistcoat on a monkey. I adore yew hedges, and can contemplate cubic miles of them without tiring, but they would look pretentious here, and wrong.

Before you get out your handkerchiefs, I should say that my November pang doesn't last long. We have, in fact, plenty of green stuff to see us through. Just not the sort of evergreen that squats coniferously in an island bed all summer, announcing smugly that it is there purely for winter interest. The mixed hedges that enclose the garden were holly in origin, and that is still the chief ingredient. There are places where ivy has triumphed, but that too is evergreen and makes a surprisingly good hedge. In the gaps where ashes had to come out I have plugged with *Daphniphyllum* and *Griselinia*, partly because I had more seedlings than I could give away and partly because I was curious to see how they would do.

When we came I had seven *Pinus pinea* seedlings that I had been nursing in pots, which I consigned to a reckless experiment. Knowing that they might never make the fine umbrellas that we see around the Mediterranean, I put them in a row, about two feet apart. Eventually, it is hoped, they will form a wall of pine trunks, with their heads making an evergreen tunnel of the path behind. So far they are growing fast and happily, but I am reconciled to taking a few out if things start to go wrong. Having just one full-grown stone pine in the garden would be enough to satisfy my craving (which I should perhaps have thought about when I greedily hung on to the other six).



> *" the bamboos... are never unlovely, but suddenly come into new focus as the world collapses around them "*

Out of all the forest of conifers that infested this garden when we came, only one remains. It is a great fir that towers over the side of the house and was, I am told by someone who lived here as a boy, a Christmas tree planted out one January in the 1950s. Wonderful though it is, it is a lesson in the disadvantages of big evergreens. That is where the hedge beneath has turned to ivy and the paths to earthquake rubble, and the shade it spreads is nothing compared with the dryness and starvation within its sphere of influence. One is enough.

So for my winter greens I look to plants that surprise me by not being deciduous. Things that were planted with no thought of winter and then pay the compliment of being steadfast. Like a friend who stays on after the party to help clear up. Chief among these are the bamboos, which are never unlovely, but suddenly come into new focus as the world collapses around them. Would they, I bait myself, be looking even lovelier against a background of yew? ☐

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